THAT FIGHTING SPIRIT OF METHODISM

PAUL NEFF GARBER

P.T.R.

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
MAY 2 1932
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Division BX8232
Section .G21

THAT FIGHTING SPIRIT OF METHODISM

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
MAY 2 1932
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THAT FIGHTING SPIRIT OF METHODISM

PAUL NEFF GARBER, Ph.D.
Professor of Church History in Duke University

THE PIEDMONT PRESS
GREENSBORO, N. C.
1928

Copyright 1928 by
The Piedmont Press

To

Those Methodist Fighters of Yesterday

Our Inspiration Today

PREFACE

The author admires men and women who achieve. He respects any individual or organization that shows a fighting spirit in the face of hardships, grave problems and discouragements. That attitude on the part of the author explains perhaps the attraction which Methodism has always had for him. In all his study of history the author has found no phase that possesses the romance, the heroic element, the interest and the inspiration that is found in the record of Methodism. It is especially thrilling to study about the work of that great religious warrior, John Wesley; how Wesley with the spirit of the Crusader overcame the many obstacles and discouragements of his day and laid the foundation for world Methodism. The author believes that John Wesley was the greatest man that ever lived; that he has influenced more lives; has touched more hearts; has inspired more people than any individual of his century or of any century. John Wesley truly possessed a fighting spirit.

The purpose of this book is to interpret for modern Methodists the fighting spirit of John Wesley and his early followers. It is hoped that this brief story of the life, work and contributions of John Wesley and his helpers will cause modern Methodists to realize that there was a fighting spirit in the Methodism of the eighteenth century. It is also hoped that these excerpts from the records of early Methodism may create a better understanding of the historic basis of Methodism and may inspire in the reader a greater love and devotion for the Methodist Church. It is the author's desire that the

same fighting spirit which so fully dominated the life of John Wesley may also become the possession of all Methodists.

I am greatly indebted to the Reverend A. W. Plyler, Editor of the North Carolina Christian Advocate, and to the Reverend M. T. Plyler, Associate Editor of the North Carolina Christian Advocate, for their interest, aid and encouragement in the preparation of this volume. It was on their invitation and suggestion that I first published these chapters as articles in the North Carolina Christian Advocate. I am under special obligations to my wife, Orina Kidd Garber, for her helpful suggestions and constructive criticisms.

PAUL NEFF GARBER

Durham, North Carolina
August 20, 1928

CONTENTS

Preface		vii
Chapter		Page
I	What is the Fighting Spirit?	13
II	What Early Methodism Had to Fight	19
III	John Wesley's Fighting Heritage	24
IV	Miniature Methodism at Oxford	32
V	Wesley Seeks Vital Religion	36
VI	Wesley Suffers Defeat in Georgia	41
VII	The Birthday of Methodism	47
VIII	The Crusader	53
IX	Small Beginnings	59
X	Laymen to the Rescue	64
XI	Organized for Conquest	69
XII	The Mother Church of Methodism	75
XIII	The Price of a Great Cause	80
XIV	Facing the Issues	87
XV	"Unto One of the Least of These"	92
XVI	"Suffer the Little Children"	98
XVII	An Intelligent Fighting Spirit	104

XVIII Applying it to Wealth 110
XIX The Conqueror of John Calvin . . . 115
XX A Sensible Theology 121
XXI "And He Hath Put a New Song in My Mouth"—Psalm 40:3 128
XXII Among Fighting Irishmen 136
XXIII The Methodist Invasion of Scotland . . 142
XXIV The Orator of Methodism 149
XXV To the Aristocracy Also 156
XXVI Crossing the Rubicon 163
XXVII "Tolerance" 170
XXVIII England to John Wesley, Dr. 178
XXIX "I Have Fought a Good Fight" II Tim. 4:7 185
Index 193

THAT FIGHTING SPIRIT OF METHODISM

THAT FIGHTING SPIRIT OF METHODISM

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THAT FIGHTING SPIRIT?

HAT is that fighting spirit?

Richmond Nolley was one of the many circuit riders of early nineteenth century American Methodism. His annual conference had organized a new church in what is now the northern part of the state of Mississippi. There was no parsonage nor were there any church buildings in this new circuit, but the conference, in typical Methodist fashion, felt that there might be some frontiersmen there who needed the comfort of religion. Nolley was assigned to this new work. So, riding a horse, the Methodist circuit rider's faithful companion, Nolley started for his new circuit.

For eleven days in succession he traveled through the woods exploring his new circuit. Finally he came to the Tombigbee river. Here he noticed fresh wagon tracks which told him that a settler had come into that section. He followed the tracks and soon came upon a frontier family. The head of the family had selected a spot for his new home and was in the act of unloading his goods from the wagon, while his wife prepared the first supper in their new country. As Nolley rode up, the astonished frontiersman said:

"What! Are you here?"

"I am here, sir," replied Nolley, encouraged by this recognition, "but, I am sorry to say, I do not recall the happiness of our former acquaintance. Where, sir, have you known me?"

"I have never seen you before," grunted the settler, "but I know that you are one of those Methodist preachers. It is just two years ago that I left Virginia and settled in Georgia to get away from Methodist preachers; but you hunted me out, and in Georgia got my wife and daughter into your church. Then I left Georgia for this place, sure that I would be rid of you forever; but here you are before I had one night's peace."

"My friend," said Nolley, "go where you may, you will find Methodist preachers. If you go to heaven you'll find Methodist preachers there; if you go to hell, I am afraid you will find some there; and you see how it is on earth, so you had better make terms with us and be at peace."

This illustration exemplifies the fighting spirit of the men who laid the foundation of American Methodism. No place was too remote for the Methodist preacher. To tell the story of the love of Jesus Christ for humanity was the great mission of the circuit rider, even if it carried him hundreds of miles from the established centers of civilization. So faithful were the early circuit riders in filling their appointments and in traveling over their large circuits that it became a proverbial saying in bitter cold weather: "There is nothing out today but crows and Methodist preachers." A historian once said that the best way to have discovered the North Pole would have been to have included it in a Methodist circuit. It was this ceaseless activity on the part of the early Methodists that has made the record of Methodism a story of romance and adventure. It is a history of unequalled heroism.

Such has been the fighting spirit of Methodism. From the day of John Wesley to the present time Methodism by its aggressive religious program has attracted universal attention. So unique has been the spirit and genius of Methodism that it has won the much prized appellation of "Christianity in earnest." Harnack, the great German historian and theologian, declared: "No type of believers has interested me more than the Methodists. If I read church history correctly, that denomination is richest in experimental religion, most active in Christian work, most fertile in results of all since the Reformation." The historian Bancroft says: "The Methodists were the pioneers of religion; the breath of liberty has wafted their messages to the masses of the people, encourage them to collect white and black in church or greenwood for council in divine love and the full assurance of faith, and carried their consolations and songs and prayers to the farthest cabins in the wilderness." The fear of Methodism by Roman Catholic leaders also exemplifies the unique fighting spirit of our church. The late Bishop Spaulding said: "The only sect that Roman Catholics fear is organized Methodism, and this fear is based upon its aggressive zeal and hearty presentation of truth to the common people without making any preposterous claim to apostolic successorship or offensive assertion of being 'the' church. I greatly fear the influence of Methodism upon the second and third generation of imported Romanists."

The important point to notice is that the fighting spirit of Methodism did not end with the work of John Wesley, the ministry of Francis Asbury, or the labors of the circuit riders. Methodism is witnessing today repeated examples of that same energy and zeal. The best modern example is the

growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, after the Civil War.

Only a few facts need be presented to show that when the Civil War ended, the Southern Methodist Church was in a critical condition. The church had suffered as had the South, from the vicissitudes of the war. In 1860, the church reported a membership of 757,205, but in 1866 the number had fallen to 511,161, showing a loss of 246,044 members for the period of the war. In 1858 the church had one hundred and six schools and colleges, but during the war the endowments were swept away and in some cases the buildings were destroyed or abandoned. The annual conferences met irregularly and it was impossible for the church to hold the General Conference in 1862. Hundreds of church buildings were burned or dismantled while others were used by the Northern army for hospitals and stables. The Southern Methodist Publishing House at Nashville, Tennessee, was occupied and used by the United States military authorities during the greater part of the war. During the war the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the consent of the Federal War Department, began to send missionaries and ministers to the territory occupied by the Federal troops, and took possession of many Southern Methodist pulpits. At the beginning of the war there were 207,776 colored members of the church, while statistics for 1866 gave only 48,742. The missionaries in China were cut off from all communication with the mission board. In 1866 the bishops could only state: "Our missionary work, once the glory of our church, has been well nigh ruined." The Sunday school program had been hurt during the war. Many of the most liberal supporters of the church were reduced to poverty. There was not a single conference in the bounds of Southern Methodism in which the roar and flash of

arms had not been heard. Such was the condition of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at the close of the Civil War. Certainly its former glory had vanished.

But in the face of these difficulties the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did not surrender. In the summer of 1865 the bishops met and, after consultation, they issued an Episcopal Address to the members of the church. To quote Bishop McTyeire: "It was the blast of a trumpet and gave no uncertain sound that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, still lived." The bishops declared, that neither disintegration nor absorption was to be considered for a moment. In eloquent terms they stated that whatever banner had fallen or had been folded up, the banner of Southern Methodism was still unfurled. They called for the meeting of the General Conference in April, 1866, the first General Conference since 1858. In the Episcopal Address to this conference, the bishops sounded the keynote when they said, "We must meet the emergency with an unfaltering purpose, and rise with determined might to the difficult, yet hopeful task which lies before us." With such sentiments we have the rejuvenation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, after the Civil War.

How different is the inventory of Southern Methodism in 1928 as compared with the condition of the church in 1866. Instead of 511,161 members in 1866 the church can now claim about 2,650,000, a gain in sixty years of more than 500 per cent. Upon the ruins and ashes of the Civil War the church has erected church buildings, parsonages, colleges, and orphanages, which were estimated in 1927 to be worth more than a quarter of a billion dollars. During the quadrennium of 1918-1922 the church raised $13,650,000 for mission work, while the missionary force has more than

doubled since 1919. The fact that in 1928 seventy-two per cent of the total members received into the church came from the Sunday school suggests the important place the once weak Sunday school has come to occupy in Southern Methodism. In 1865 the church did not own a hospital, but in 1926 the general hospital board could report that there were Southern Methodist hospitals in operation, aggregating the value of eight and a half million dollars, with 884 beds and 200,000 patients treated annually. The achievements of Southern Methodism since the Civil War have proven the truth of the statement of the bishops in 1865 that the banner of Southern Methodism is still unfurled.

Methodism now faces the problems of the new century. Shall our church continue to hold the influential position it secured in the nineteenth century? To keep the banner of Methodism unfurled, the twentieth century Methodists must carry on that same fighting spirit which won for Methodism years ago the distinctive title of "Christianity in earnest."

CHAPTER II

WHAT EARLY METHODISM HAD TO FIGHT

HAT fighting spirit" of our church dates back to the very beginnings of Methodism, for when Methodism arose in England a fighting spirit was absolutely necessary for the combating of the sins, vices, inequalities and irreligion of that day. As a young man is praised for the successful overcoming of handicaps in early life, so must Methodism be given double credit because it began fighting and conquering great giants. In order to appreciate the problems which Methodism had to face it is necessary to understand conditions in England when Methodism was born.

Religion had reached a low ebb. The state church, known as the "Church of England" or the "Anglican Church," had lost the power and position which it had secured during the Protestant Reformation. The Baptists, Presbyterians, Puritans, and Quakers had also lost much of their former influence in the life of the nation. In fact, testimony from different sources proves that England had almost lost her religion. Montesquieu, the French philosopher, after a visit to England said: "There is no such thing as religion in England." He further stated that when religion was mentioned in polite society, it excited nothing but laughter. A nobleman, Sir John Barnard, complained that it really seemed to be the fashion for a man to declare himself of no religion. The historian Green writes: "There was an open revolt against religion and against churches in both extremes of English

society." Bishop Butler of the Anglican Church declared: "It has come to be taken for granted that Christianity is no longer a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious." John Wesley's conclusion was: "Ungodliness is our universal, our constant, our peculiar characteristic."

The same dark picture is seen when a study is made of the clergy of the Anglican Church. They were lazy. Many priests did nothing more than read the Prayer Book in the services while extempore sermons, special services, baptisms, and catechisms were neglected. The young preachers were so ignorant that Bishop Burnet said: "Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures." The clergy were poor moral examples for the people. Bate, an army chaplain, was killed in a duel. Another priest received the title of the "bruising parson" because of his many fistic bouts. Unfortunately, it was not uncommon for an Anglican clergyman to leave his pulpit after Sunday services and proceed to the tavern to drink and gamble. The preachers lacked vitality and enthusiasm. One preacher said: "We should take care never to overshoot ourselves in the pursuits of virtue." Judge Blackstone asserted that he "heard not a single sermon which had more of the gospel in it than the writings of Cicero." Wesley described the clergy as "dull, heavy, blockish ministers; men of no life, no spirit, no readiness of thought; who are consequently the jest of every pert fool."

Disregard for religion was shown by the desecration of the Sabbath. Sunday was losing its distinctly religious character. The Bishop of Lichfield in 1724 said: "The Lord's Day is now the devil's market day. More lewdness, drunkenness, more quarrels and murders, more sin is contrived and

committed on this day than all the other days of the week together."

Irreligion was not the only blot on English life, for with the loss of religion, England experienced a lowering of all morality. Foulness stained the general speech. So common was swearing among the higher classes, that a clerk, unable to identify a certain woman, exclaimed: "I could not make out who she was, but she swore so dreadfully she must be a lady of quality." It created no scandal when a prime minister appeared in public with his mistress instead of his wife.

Drunkenness was very common in eighteenth century England. In 1736 every sixth house in London was a licensed alehouse. "Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for two pence" with free straw to lay upon during the sobering period was a popular advertisement for groghouses. Bishop Benson in 1721 declared: "The accursed spirituous liquors, which to the shame of our government, are so easily to be had, and in such quantities drunk, have changed the very nature of our people."

The English criminal law was a disgrace to a civilized nation. The courts worked upon the theory that you must scare the criminal; that punishments must be severe and heartless. There were two hundred and fifty-three offenses for which the death penalty was given. One author writes: "If a man injured Westminster Bridge, he was hanged; if he cut down a young tree, if he shot a rabbit, if he stole property valued at four shillings, he was hanged." Women guilty of murdering their husbands were publicly burned at the stake as late as 1790. So harsh and severe was the popular feeling of that day that Edmund Burke said he could obtain the assent of the House of Commons to any bill imposing the death penalty. The attitude of the people was so morbid that thous-

ands came to witness the execution of a criminal. It was the best public amusement.

The conditions in the jails were intolerable. Except for a small subsidy from the government, the jailer's salary came from fees extracted from the prisoners. For example, a soldier falsely accused of a crime was acquitted by the court. Immediately he was imprisoned again because of the debt he had incurred with the jailer while awaiting his trial. Prisoners unable to pay such fees were easily disposed of by placing them with men suffering from smallpox. In 1759 it was estimated that one out of four died each year from the treatment received in jails. After visiting Newgate prison, Wesley declared that there could be nothing like it this side of hell.

Popular education of even the lowest grade was unknown in eighteenth century England. The majority of the lower classes could neither read nor write; for only in charity schools was instruction given to the children of the poor. Education of the masses was considered a bad public policy, since it might cause them to despise their place in life instead of remaining content as servants of the higher classes.

The political condition of England was also bad. The government was in the control of the wealthy landed aristocracy. Two-thirds of the members of the House of Commons were appointed by wealthy men. The House of Commons did not fairly represent the nation because the plan of apportioning members was antiquated. For example, Old Sarum, once a town, now a sheep-walk, still returned two members to Parliament, as did Dunwich, half under the sea, and Droitwich, an abandoned salt pit. On the other hand, great industrial cities like Manchester and Birmingham had no representation. Scotland was allowed forty-five members

while the county of Cornwall with only one-eighth of the population had forty-four seats. It is estimated that only five per cent of the men in England had the right to vote. Scotland with a population of 2,000,000 had only 3,000 voters. Democracy, as now understood, did not exist in eighteenth century England.

England was in a slump. Bishop Ryle stated: "From the year 1700 till about the era of the French Revolution, England seemed barren of all good. There was a gross, thick, religious and moral darkness; a darkness that might be felt." Another writer expressed the pessimism of the period in these words: "Our light looks like the evening of the world." Such were the general existing conditions throughout England in the eighteenth century.

It was during this period of religious depression, social evils, and political inequalities that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was born. To overcome these existing evils, Wesley and his early followers had to adopt an aggressive program; a fighting zeal which Methodism to this day has never lost. It remains for later chapters to show how Wesley and the early Methodists defeated the giants of that day and helped to win for our church the title of "Christianity in earnest."

CHAPTER III

JOHN WESLEY'S FIGHTING HERITAGE

CERTAIN man who had achieved fame in life was asked to explain the secret of his success. He replied: "It is not difficult to explain, for I have in my veins the blood of ancestors who have achieved. More than that I began life standing upon the shoulders of my noble father and I have the golden memory of a true mother's kiss upon my lips." Such a statement could well apply to John Wesley, because the founder of Methodism had a noble ancestry, a great father, and a wonderful mother. From this heritage came the fighting spirit which Wesley bequeathed to Methodism.

John Wesley could boast of a proud lineage. Long before the Norman Conquest the Wesley family had occupied a prominent place in England. The family can be traced back to an early period in English history under the names of Wesley, Westley, and Wellesley. From the insignia on the Wesley coat of arms it is supposed that some of the Wesleys took part in the Crusades. Whether this be true or not, the crusading spirit of John Wesley was common to many others of the Wesley stock. From this family came militant reformers and warriors. The Duke of Wellington was a Wesley. Up to 1800 his name appeared in the British army list as "Arthur Wesley." In his great victory over Napoleon at Waterloo he showed that same fighting spirit in military affairs as his relative, John Wesley, showed in religious matters.

The founder of Methodism came from a family noted

for their scholarship, their courage, their independent will, and their true piety. His great grandfather, his grandfather, and his father before him were graduates of Oxford University, and were preachers of the gospel. When Wesley was graduated from Oxford and was ordained minister in the Anglican Church, he represented the fourth successive generation of Wesleys who had distinguished themselves in the field of culture and religion. Canon Overton regards it as an evidence of John Wesley's good breeding that he was "never intoxicated by being brought into contact with the great."

Samuel Wesley, the father of John Wesley, was a clergyman of the Anglican Church. After being graduated from Oxford University, he served as naval chaplain for a short period. In 1697 he located at the small town of Epworth, where for thirty-eight years he was the rector of the Epworth parish. It was here, on June 17, 1703, that John Wesley was born.

Samuel Wesley had certain admirable characteristics which are seen later in the life of his famous son. He was a scholar and a prolific writer. In addition to many smaller works he wrote "Life of Christ" and "History of the Old and New Testaments." His "Dissertation on the Book of Job," a large volume of six hundred pages, was purchased by the leading men of England. He associated with the literary men of his day. Pope, the great English writer, declared of Samuel Wesley: "I call him what he is, 'a learned man'."

Samuel Wesley possessed the fighting spirit so characteristic of his son. As he served a very irreligious parish, his strict religious discipline caused the people to rebel against him. His enemies stabbed his cows, destroyed his crops, burned his rectory. When his friends, fearful for his safety, advised him to leave Epworth, he gave a typical Methodist reply:

"'Tis like a coward to desert my post because the enemy fire thick upon me. They have only wounded me yet, and I believe can't kill me." He lived to see the day when the people of Epworth forgot their prejudices, and learned to love the admirable qualities of their fighting rector.

Samuel Wesley had broader religious views than had his fellow Anglican clergymen. Although a century ahead of his time, he became a strong advocate of foreign missions. He offered to go to the Orient as a missionary if some one would care for his family. He believed in vital religion. To his son John, he wrote: "The inward witness, the inward witness—this is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity." Although he lived at a time when religion had reached a low ebb in England, he never lost faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness. To his son Charles he wrote: "Charles, be steady; the Christian faith will surely revive in these kingdoms. You shall see it, though I shall not."

Susanna Wesley, the mother of John Wesley, was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, who was the leading Puritan preacher of his day. In 1688 she married Samuel Wesley and for the rest of her life she was a tender companion to her husband and a devoted mother to her nineteen children, eleven of whom reached adult life. Although John Wesley had a great father, he had a much greater mother. It was Susanna Wesley who did the major part in moulding the life of her son, thus indirectly influencing the future of Methodism. A few illustrations from the life of this great mother will explain how she influenced her illustrious son.

John Wesley received his first and his lasting religious principles from his mother. Susanna Wesley made her home a school of religion. She made it a rule not to permit her children to spend more time in recreation than in private

religious exercises. As soon as the children could speak they were taught to offer simple prayers and to be reverent at family worship and church services. As soon as they were able to read, they were required to read four chapters of the Bible each day. When the children grew older she gave them a course in the fundamentals of religion. Unable to secure a suitable manual of doctrine, she prepared one for herself. In addition she held a private conference once a week with each child, which enabled her to meet their religious doubts and solve their religious difficulties. So important were these conferences to John, that while at Oxford University, in a letter to his mother he wrote: "If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not it would be as useful now for correcting my heart as it was for forming my judgment." Under such training the children of Susanna Wesley became devoted Christians.

Susanna Wesley was interested in vital religion. Once when Samuel Wesley was absent at London, he engaged a curate to carry on the work of the parish. This man was so inefficient in his work that Susanna Wesley invited the people to meet in her home on Sunday evenings for prayer, Scripture reading, and discussion. These services became so popular that she soon had more listeners than did the curate. As such proceedings were against the regulations of the Anglican Church, Samuel Wesley protested to his wife. In her reply she showed the real Methodist spirit by writing: "If you think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your positive command, in such full and express terms as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good." John Wesley was only nine

years of age when his mother chose "to be irregular rather than neglect the opportunity of doing good." It is not altogether surprising then, that her son later broke the rules of the Anglican Church, and declared "Church or no church, we must attend to the work of saving souls."

Susanna Wesley had an independent will which she transmitted to her son. Although her father was the leading Puritan divine of England, Susanna, when only thirteen years of age showed her independent spirit by breaking from the Puritanism of her father and entering the Anglican Church. She carried the same strong will into her married life. To her son John she wrote: "It is a misfortune almost peculiar to our family that your father and I seldom think alike." John Wesley came honestly by his independent spirit.

Susanna Wesley understood poverty, for the Wesley family lived in continual conflict with indigence. Samuel Wesley's salary was never more than $650 a year. To feed, clothe, and educate a large family upon his small salary was no small task, the burden of which fell upon the mother. Samuel Wesley was placed in jail on one occasion because of his inability to pay a small bill. During this period the Archbishop of York asked Mrs. Wesley whether she ever really wanted bread. She replied: "My lord, I will freely own to your grace that strictly speaking I never did want bread. But then I had so much care to get it before it was eat, and to pay for it after—I think to have bread on such terms is the next degree of wretchedness to having none at all." In the Epworth rectory John Wesley learned from his mother the value of money and the privations of poverty. It left an indelible stamp upon him. When he entered Oxford University he decided that he could live upon $140 a year, and for the remaining seventy-one years of his life he never spent more

than that amount upon himself during any single year. This is the reason that he was able to contribute during his lifetime more than $150,000 for the relief of the poverty-stricken people of England.

Susanna Wesley ran her home upon a systematic basis. As soon as the children were born, their life was regulated by method. They slept and ate at certain hours. After the age of five they spent six hours a day in study under the individual instruction of their mother. They read the Bible and said their prayers at a set time. Little did Susanna Wesley think as she enforced discipline in her home that her great son would later use the spirit of her systematic program as the model for the greatest ecclesiastical organization of modern times.

Wesley inherited a serene nature from his mother. In later life he expressed admiration for the serenity with which his mother transacted business, wrote letters, and conversed surrounded by thirteen children. It was this early example of his mother that enabled Wesley to remain serene when he faced the perplexing problems of his busy life.

John Wesley's mother had the true missionary zeal. In answer to the question from John as to whether or not he should go as a missionary to Georgia, she replied: "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice if they were all so employed, though I should never see them more." It is no wonder that her son later in life could make the immortal statement: "I look upon the whole world as my parish."

The mother of John Wesley possessed the spirit of tenderness. Some have claimed that her intellectual life left her devoid of human feeling. That is not true. Once her son Samuel wrote her a letter and addressed her as "Madam." She replied: "Sammy—I do not love distance and ceremony. There is more love and tenderness in the name of mother

than in all the complimental titles in the world." The spirit of kindness and tenderness brought into her son at the Epworth rectory caused John never to forget the outcasts of life who needed kindness and consideration.

Susanna Wesley's influence followed John to Oxford University. She kept up a regular correspondence with her son. Her admirable letters are models to be followed by modern mothers. It was to his mother that John turned when he had theological difficulties at Oxford. When John showed ascetic tendencies, she wisely advised her son to enjoy the present hour and not become a morbid religious fanatic. When John was confused over the doctrine of predestination, his mother counseled him that predestination ought to be abhorred since it was inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God. When Wesley later adopted the Arminian theory of universal salvation in opposition to the narrow Calvinistic theory of predestination he was only accepting the religious principles of his mother.

The above facts verify the statement of Dr. Stevens: "In the household of the Epworth rectory can be traced the real origin of Methodism." Another historian has said that the mother of John Wesley was the mother of Methodism. It was the practical methods of Susanna Wesley more than any other human cause that produced the vital, triumphant, world Methodism. Her courage, her independent will, her practical religion, and her common sense were bequeathed to her son, who, in turn, transmitted them to Methodism.

Susanna Wesley must often have had periods of discouragement. No doubt she often asked herself if it were worth the price to spend so much time with her children. She once wrote: "There are few, if any, that would entirely devote twenty years of the prime of life in hope of saving the souls

of children; for that was my principal intention, however unskilfully managed." Her efforts were not in vain. Queens and ladies of high society of eighteenth century England have long since been forgotten, but not Susanna Wesley. She gave her life to her son and he in turn immortalized his mother. Over eleven million Methodists today thank God for the life, the character, and inspiration of Susanna Wesley.

John Wesley had a great heritage. The blood of noble ancestry, the example of a sturdy father, and the influence and love of a noble, upright mother produced the great fighter of Methodism. It was this fighting heritage that enabled John Wesley to meet and conquer the vices, the social evils, and the irreligion of eighteenth century England.

CHAPTER IV

MINIATURE METHODISM AT OXFORD

XFORD UNIVERSITY will always be sacred to Methodists because John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, entered that ancient seat of learning in the summer of 1720. There Wesley earned the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts; there he made his decision to enter the Christian ministry; and there when only twenty-two years old he was elected a Fellow in Lincoln College, Oxford. Wesley remained at Oxford until 1735, so that with the exception of several lengthy visits to his parents at Epworth, fifteen years of the formative period of his life were spent in Oxford University.

The gratitude of Methodism to Oxford University is not only because the founder of Methodism remained there fifteen years, but also because certain young men in 1729 organized there a religious society, which may be considered as a miniature of Methodism. Also, as shall be seen later, it was at Oxford that Methodism received its distinctive name.

Charles Wesley, a younger brother of John Wesley, was the founder of the Holy Club. When he entered Oxford University in 1726, he showed very little interest in religion. When John reproved him for his attitude, Charles answered: "What would you have me be, a saint all at once?" For three years he lived the life of a gay Oxford student, but in 1729 he suddenly became a very serious young man. The religious earnestness of Charles Wesley attracted several other young men. This resulted in the organization of an informal

club, the aim of which was for its members to obey the laws of God, the rules of the church, and the statutes of the University. Although the club was organized while John Wesley was absent at Epworth, when he returned to Oxford he became the leader of the group.

The first aim of the members of the Holy Club was to make themselves acceptable in the sight of God. By systematic rules and methods they endeavored to secure this end. They regularly attended Holy Communion every Sunday and on holidays. They observed the fasts of the Anglican church. They spent an hour every morning and every evening in prayer. They read the Bible as a regular part of their daily routine. John Wesley writes: "In 1729 I began not only to read, but to study the Bible as the one, the only standard of truth and the only model of pure religion." In addition to the reading of the Scriptures, the members of the Holy Club began to read such books of religious devotion as Taylor's "Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying"; Kempis's "The Imitation of Christ"; and Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life." They shunned evil companions. In order that he might avoid all vile conversation, John Wesley refused to return the calls of irreligious men. The members met together each evening for prayer, consultation and mutual encouragement.

People who are honestly interested in living a good life soon turn their attention to the welfare of others. So it was with the members of the Holy Club. They were a half century ahead of their day in the belief that religion is concerned with the care of the body as well as with the nourishment of the soul. They made visits to the prisoners in the jails; offered prayers in the cells; and raised money to defend unfortunate prisoners. They gave food, medicine, money,

and clothing to the poor people of the town. They taught catechisms and prayers to the children of the poor. Out of his small income, John Wesley organized and supported a school for poor children. Every member of the club endeavored to spend one hour each day speaking to men about religion. In order to carry on their philanthropic work the members of the club contributed heavily of their funds. John Wesley during this period began the habit of living on $140 a year, giving the remainder of his income to charity.

While leader of this club, John Wesley developed certain characteristics which can be noted in his later career. He became an assiduous worker. He wrote: "Leisure and I have taken leave of each other." In order to have more time for work he began to rise at four o'clock in the morning, a habit which he kept for the remaining sixty years of his life. To his students he wrote: "You, who have not the assurance of a day to live, are not wise if you waste a moment." Because the people stared at him when he used university terms in his conversation, Wesley learned to speak clearly and to use simple words; an accomplishment, which later aided him in his work with the masses of England. In contact with the lower classes, Wesley "began to see the world as the scene of redemption from poverty, disease and sin."

It would seem that Oxford University would be proud of this fine group of Christian students, but unfortunately Oxford University in 1729 was not interested in religion. "In Oxford religion had dwindled down to a roll call" is the description by a contemporary. The religious earnestness and methodical habits of these few students was so novel at Oxford that the Holy Club created a sensation in the university groups and an accompanying derision. The members were called "Bible Moths," "Bible Bigots," "Sacramentarians,"

"The Enthusiasts," "The Reforming Club," and the "Godly Club." Alumni of Oxford feared that these men would bring perpetual melancholy to gay old Oxford, or that the place would become a monastery. Fogg's Weekly Journal described the members of the Holy Club as "madmen and fools." One student wrote in verse:

"By rule they eat, by rule they drink,
Do all things else by rule, but think."

Yet it was at Oxford that our church received its name. An Oxford student, one day, noticing some members of the Holy Club pass by, said in jest and ridicule: "Here is a new set of Methodists sprung up." Although that name was given in derision, it became the most common of all the appellations of the Holy Club. So popular did the term "Methodists" become at Oxford and elsewhere that Wesley later accepted it as the name for the members of his religious organization. He gave it, however, a different interpretation. "A Methodist," he said, "is one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible."

The religious and social conditions at Oxford University during the college days of Wesley are comparable to the conditions that exist in our world today. While the authorities despaired of a revival of religion at Oxford, a small group of college men, left the side lines, got into the game, and put to shame the religious leaders of that day. They were reviled and cursed, but they laid the foundation for a religious awakening that later turned England upside down. If these college students two hundred years ago could, in the face of bitter opposition, fight the evils of that day, should not our church be ashamed if it should lose in the twentieth century "that fighting spirit of Methodism" which has conquered and can conquer the social evils, sins, and irreligion of this or any century?

CHAPTER V

WESLEY SEEKS VITAL RELIGION

IT MAY be difficult for many to realize that John Wesley, the great ecclesiastical statesman, had religious difficulties in his youth. During his search for vital religion, Wesley faced the same problems that people face today, and made the same mistakes which are now so often made. It was not until Wesley was thirty-five years old that he came in vital contact with his Saviour, and was imbued with that religious zeal which made him the religious genius of the eighteenth century. He spent the first thirty-five years of his life in an earnest attempt to find true religion. A study of the early life of John Wesley will prove helpful to the young people of today who have religious doubts and perplexities.

The life of John Wesley shows the value of religious training in the home, since the religious teachings of Susanna Wesley had a lasting influence upon her son. In the Epworth rectory he developed such a serious religious attitude that he was admitted to the Lord's Supper when scarcely eight years of age. In the following manner he described his early training: "Till I was about ten years old I had been strictly educated and carefully taught that I could only be saved by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God."

The first shock to his youthful religion came at the age of eleven, when he entered the Charterhouse, a preparatory school. There was a great contrast between the religious

atmosphere of the Epworth rectory and the gay, frivolous life lived by the callous youths of the Charterhouse, who were, for the most part, irreligious. There Wesley lost some of his serious nature. The historian Tyerman declares: "John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint and left it a sinner." While the statement is exaggerated, there is no doubt that Wesley's religious stock took a slump at the Charterhouse. Later in life when writing about his days at Charterhouse, he admitted: "I still read the Scriptures, and said my prayers, morning and evening. And what I now hoped to be saved by was (1) not being as bad as other people, (2) having still a kindness for religion, and (3) reading the Bible, going to church and saying my prayers." Many people have this kind of religion, but such views never produced a revival.

While an undergraduate at Oxford from 1720-1725 Wesley did not show that religious zeal which later characterized his life. During these years he made very few references to religion in his letters to his parents. Several years later, he wrote: "Being removed to the University for five years, I still said my prayers in public and private. . . .Yet I had not all this while so much a notion of inward holiness." Although in his maturity Wesley, always minimized his religious status while at Oxford, yet, as stated by a modern historian: "The truth seems to have been that he was a wholly normal young man, not too good to live with, but infinitely superior, both in mind and spirit, to nine-tenths of the men who were in the Oxford of that day."

After Wesley received his Bachelor of Arts degree at Oxford in 1725, he decided to enter the ministry, but a flaming passion for saving souls did not determine his decision. He tells us: "When I was about twenty-two my father pressed me to enter into Holy Orders." It was his early training

coupled with the influence of his family plus the fact that he was better prepared to enter the field of the ministry that caused him to become an Anglican clergyman.

In order to better prepare for the ministry he began to read religious books. The reading of such books as Kempis's "The Imitation of Christ," and Law's "Serious Call" gave him a new conception of religion. It was not the idea of abject obedience to divine laws which had been taught him at home. He says: "I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. . . . So that now doing so much and living so good a life I doubted not that I was a good Christian." Wesley was developing a mystical idea of religion.

Even that type of religion lacked the fighting spirit of Methodism. In August, 1727, Wesley returned to Epworth and for two years he served as a curate for his father. In this work he made a dismal failure. Fitchett writes: "He drew no crowds. He alarmed no consciences. He influenced no lives." Later Wesley wrote: "I preached much but saw no fruit of my labor." Fifteen years later he could sway an audience of 20,000, but at Epworth he could not hold the attention of even a few people. What was wrong with Wesley? What did he lack?

Upon his return to Oxford in 1729 he joined the Holy Club. As leader of the Holy Club from 1729-1735 Wesley endeavored to secure inward holiness by good works and ascetic habits. He visited the prisoners, aided the poor, taught the children, prayed, fasted, and denied self, in order that he

might be acceptable in the sight of God. He was sincere; he renounced the things of this world; he had piety; he did good works; but yet he never felt that he was in real contact with God. He had a religion that lacked vitality.

One cause for his lifeless religion was that Wesley was self-centered. He was primarily interested in saving his own soul, and all his acts of charity and asceticism were indirectly aimed at that one goal. For example, in 1734 his father desired that John should return and become rector of the Epworth parish. Wesley's reply showed his selfish spirit. He said the first point to be considered is "which way of life will conduce most to my own improvement." When his father suggested that John might do much good at Epworth, Wesley curtly replied: "The question is not whether I could do more good there or here, but whether I could do more to myself." What a different Wesley this was from the man who later said: "I look upon the whole world as my parish."

Although Wesley refused to go to Epworth because of hurting his own soul, he welcomed an opportunity to go to Georgia. In 1735 he was invited by the trustees of Georgia to go to Savannah as the Anglican clergyman and also as missionary to the Indians. With strange reasons Wesley accepted the invitation. He wrote as follows: "My chief motive is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen. . . . I cannot hope to attain the same degree of holiness here which I may there." John Wesley was a unique missionary. He was a soldier of the Cross whose first aim was the saving of his own soul, and after that, the souls of others.

Where was "that fighting spirit of Methodism?" Certainly Wesley did not have it as he sailed for Georgia. His heart had not yet been "strangely warmed." He had still to

learn that true religion does not consist in mechanically doing good works and living an ascetic life. He had yet to experience the feeling of divine assurance of sonship which comes only through simple trust and faith in Jesus Christ. Would missionary life cause Wesley to experience true religion? Would he meet God in Georgia? Would he find in far away America "that fighting spirit of Methodism"?

CHAPTER VI

WESLEY SUFFERS DEFEAT IN GEORGIA

ON OCTOBER 14, 1735, John Wesley sailed from England for America. Although ostensibly he was going to Georgia as a missionary, he was, in actuality embarking upon a personal religious quest. John Wesley had never come into vital contact with God; he was dissatisfied with his religious life; he was groping in the dark for an anchor of faith. It was his hope now that he might find vital religion by preaching the gospel of Christ to the Indians in America.

During the voyage to Georgia, Wesley was further impressed by his lack of faith. On the same ship were a group of Moravians from Germany. These people, noted for their piety and missionary zeal, exemplified for Wesley a new type of filial trust. He found that the Moravians used the word "faith" in a sense different from what he used it. This was shown during a severe storm at sea. All on board the ship were frightened excepting the Moravians, who calmly sang hymns during the storm. Their composed assurance in the hour of danger impressed Wesley. After the storm had abated he asked one of the Moravians: "Was (sic) you not afraid?"

"I thank God, no," answered the Moravian.

Then Wesley inquired, "But were not your women and children afraid?"

"No," replied the Moravian, "our women and children are not afraid to die."

Wesley who had been afraid during the storm, longed for this faith which would give him confidence in the hour of danger. His faith at that time was not sufficient in the face of death.

Upon Wesley's arrival in Georgia, a Moravian again demonstrated to him the comparative weakness of his faith. When Wesley asked Spangenberg, the Moravian pastor, for advice regarding his new work, Spangenberg said: "My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions: Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?"

Wesley was silent.

Spangenberg continued: "Do you know Jesus Christ?"

After a pause Wesley answered, "I know that he is the Saviour of the World."

"True," said Spangenberg, "but do you know that he has saved you?"

"I hope he died for me," Wesley replied.

"But," persisted Spangenberg, "do you know yourself?"

Wesley murmured, "I do." Nevertheless in his diary he wrote, "But I fear they were vain words."

Wesley was disgusted with himself. He wanted to serve God. He desired to live a good life, but he did not have the glorious feeling of salvation. He did not know Jesus as a personal Saviour.

Wesley failed as a missionary to the Indians. When Wesley left England he had a lofty estimation of the American Indians. He described them as "little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God." In contact with these Indians he felt that he would find true religion. He talked so much about the virtues of the Indians that a lady said to him, "Why, Mr. Wesley, if they are all this already,

what more can Christianity do for them?" A great surprise awaited Wesley. Instead of finding the "little children" that he had imagined, he found Indians noted for drunkenness, lying, thievery, and cruelty. Tomochichi, an Indian chief, informed Wesley that the Indians were determined not to hear "the great word" which the white man had to teach. Wesley's work with the Indians was of short duration. As a missionary to them he was a failure.

Neither did Wesley succeed as minister to the white people of Savannah. He was an ecclesiastical misfit in Georgia. He endeavored to enforce in that frontier colony the High Church practices of England. He held two divine services on each week day and three on Sunday. He had Holy Communion every week, to which he denied participation of all who had not been baptized according to the method of the Anglican Church. He even refused communion to the Lutheran pastor of Georgia. He demanded the baptism of infants by immersion and the rebaptism of children of non-Anglicans. In fact he was determined to enforce the strictest ritualistic observances. He encouraged fasting of the most severe type and established in his church a system of questioning members prior to the Lord's Supper which paralleled the Roman Catholic confessional. Later in life as he reviewed his attempt at formalistic religion in Georgia, he truthfully wrote, "Can any one carry High-Church zeal higher than this?"

Wesley's ministry in Georgia was a failure. It was devoid of true spiritual life. His formalistic practices only bred trouble among the frontiersmen, who of all people, needed a vital not a ritualistic religion. He had quarrels with his parishioners. General Oglethorpe said to him: "How is it that there is no love, no meekness, no true religion among the people; but instead of this, mere formal prayers?" When

Wesley reproved one of the members for lax religious life, the man replied: "I like nothing you do. All your sermons are satires upon particular persons, therefore, I will never hear you more; and all the people are of my mind for we won't hear ourselves abused. Besides they say that they are Protestants. But as for you they cannot tell what religion you are of. They never heard of such religion before. They do not know what to make of it. And then your private behaviour—all the quarrels that have been here since you came have been 'long of you. Indeed, there is neither man nor woman in the town who minds a word you say." Such a reply was too much for Wesley. In his diary Wesley records: "So I had nothing to do but to thank him for his openness, and walk away."

The climax to Wesley's failure in Georgia came in the form of an unfortunate romance. Shortly after his arrival in Georgia, Wesley was introduced to a young lady by the name of Miss Sophy Hopkey. Miss Hopkey was in search of a husband and she considered Wesley the most eligible of her acquaintances. To win Wesley's love she became suddenly very religious; she attended regularly divine services; she dressed to suit Wesley's tastes; she nursed him when he was ill; and put herself in his path at every opportunity. Some claim that he proposed to her, but this statement Wesley always refuted. However, it cannot be denied that he cared a great deal for Miss Hopkey and under normal conditions he might have married her. As their constant companionship started gossip in Savannah, a friend asked Wesley if he intended to marry Miss Hopkey. This question caused Wesley to take the matter more seriously and, as he could not decide for himself, he stupidly referred the matter to the elders of the Moravian church in Georgia. On March 4, 1737, the

elders advised him to proceed no further with the courtship, which advice Wesley agreed to follow. When Miss Hopkey heard that Wesley had submitted the question to the Moravian elders, she, surmising correctly what the decision would be, at once turned in another direction for a husband. On March 8, she became engaged to a Mr. Williamson, a man described by Wesley as "not remarkable for handsomeness, neither for greatness, neither for wit, nor knowledge, nor sense, and least of all for religion." Four days later, on March 12, they were married. After the marriage they lived in Savannah and Wesley continued to make pastoral calls upon Mrs. Williamson. This caused the jealous husband to forbid his wife to attend church services or even to speak to Wesley. As Mrs. Williamson no longer showed her former religious attitude, Wesley on July 3, in the presence of the congregation reproved her for her behaviour. On August 7, he publicly refused to allow her to partake of the Lord's Supper. The next day her husband had Wesley arrested on the charge of defaming his wife, for which he demanded damages to the amount of $5,000. A grand jury of Wesley's enemies showed their hostility by indicting him on ten different charges. Wesley at once demanded trial, but as the charges were so weak his enemies delayed trial month after month.

Wesley realized that his period of usefulness in Georgia had ended. There was not only no opportunity to teach the Indians, but also he had lost the support of the white people. So, on December 2, 1737, he left Savannah, "after having preached the gospel," as he wrote, "not as I ought, but as I was able, one year and nine months."

Wesley was disappointed and a discouraged man as he returned to England. He had failed to find vital religion in America. To his diary he confided his thoughts. He wrote,

"I went to America to convert Indians, but O who shall convert me?" Again he enters, "Alienated as I am from the life of God, I am a child of wrath, and heir of hell." When he arrived in England he wrote in the diary, "I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."

Many people offer apologies for Wesley's career in Georgia. But why should one apologize for the sincere and earnest young man who endeavored in the best way he knew to serve God in America? Like thousands of other people Wesley was depending upon formalism, ritualism, and good works. He had not found as yet the secret of the fighting spirit of Methodism; a simple faith and trust in Jesus Christ. But a great vital experience was soon to come into the life of John Wesley. Methodism was not to be merely another denomination, but was destined instead to become "Christianity in earnest."

CHAPTER VII

THE BIRTHDAY OF METHODISM

WHO went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God," is the way John Wesley described his religious condition in February, 1738. He was disappointed and discouraged. His search in Georgia for vital religion had been unsuccessful. In fact he felt that his whole life had been a failure. Little did he suspect, as he humbly returned to England from Georgia, that he was soon to have an experience that would change not only his own life but also the very life of England.

On February 7, 1738, shortly after his arrival in England, Wesley met Peter Bohler, a Moravian missionary. As Bohler was a stranger in London, Wesley invited him to lodge in his rooming-house. There soon developed an intimate friendship between these two men. They discussed freely the subject of religion. When Wesley told Bohler of his religious struggles, Bohler contended that the trouble lay in Wesley's lack of true faith. The person with genuine faith, asserted Bohler, has also dominion over sin and a constant peace of mind. When Wesley objected to such a theory, Bohler brought to him some Moravians, who from personal experience, testified that a true living faith in Christ "is inseparable from a sense of pardon from all past and freedom from all present sins." Bohler next assured Wesley that true faith was the free gift of God; that it could be given in a moment; and that God would give it to all who sincerely and steadfastly prayed for it. What Bohler really taught Wesley was that vital religion is not a

matter of the mind but of the heart. He convinced Wesley that salvation is not secured by mechanically doing good works, but instead, is obtained through pardon received from Jesus Christ, which pardon brings to the restless soul divine assurance.

By March 5, Bohler had completely proved to Wesley his need of this supernatural faith. Wesley was determined to secure it. He wrote in his diary: "I resolved to seek it unto the end (1) by absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works of righteousness on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation; (2) by adding to the constant use of all the other means of grace, continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving faith, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me; a trust in Him, as my Christ, as my sole justification, sanctification and redemption." Weeks passed, which for Wesley were weeks of mental anguish and religious excitement. But relief came to him. The birthday of Methodism had arrived.

On Wednesday, May 24, 1738, after a day of religious excitement, Wesley unwillingly went in the evening to a meeting of a religious society which met on Aldersgate Street. Wesley tells us that in this meeting a man was reading to the audience Martin Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans, in which Luther explains what faith is and declares that a person is justified only through faith. It was while this preface was being read that a wonderful experience came into the life of Wesley. He writes: "*About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*" In that simple way Wesley explains how he met his Saviour in

a vital manner. After a search of thirty-five years Wesley had found true religion. To his soul came the assurance of divine pardon. He rushed from the meeting to tell the good news to his brother. Charles Wesley writes: "Towards ten my brother was brought in triumph by a troop of our friends, and declared, 'I believe.' "

The experience which came to Wesley in that small room on Aldersgate Street changed his life. His experience is comparable to the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Behold the change in Wesley! In 1727 as curate at Epworth he could not influence a small village. After 1738 he was able to sway a nation. In Georgia, Wesley had irritated people and had been the cause of many quarrels. Now he became the peacemaker and comforter for the troubled souls of England. The Wesley of Oxford and Georgia was interested primarily in the saving of his own soul. After meeting his Saviour on May 24, Wesley became so concerned about the souls of others that he had no time to think of self. He had refused to become rector of Epworth parish because he feared that contacts with the irreligious and common people would hurt his faith. Now his heart was warmed toward the despised and friendless masses of England. No longer did he preach uninteresting sermons, but instead he spoke with the voice of a prophet, as a man of mighty faith and conviction. Wesley in Georgia lacked the power of leadership, but now he became the greatest ecclesiastical statesman of all time. Men fell under the spell of his influence as if he were a master of magic. Before May 24, Wesley had been somewhat effeminate. The rejuvenated Wesley could face and defy angry mobs; he could convert men who came to harm him. In 1734 he had felt that the work as rector at Epworth would be too heavy for him, but now he declared that the whole

world was his parish. Wesley had been restless. He had had no peace with God. He had had a disagreeable temperament. During the remainder of his life, however, hardly a shadow of doubt concerning his spiritual state crossed his path. His faith became a settled confidence. Perpetual and unclouded sunshine came into his face. He was a joyful saint. He became "the happiest pilgrim that ever walked down the pathway of life." His heart was warmed forever.

People have asked about, critics have questioned, and skeptics have doubted the experience on May 24, 1738, that so completely changed John Wesley. Many have tried to explain away the real significance of that hour. Southey says that it was a mild attack of indigestion which made Wesley's heart flutter and pulse beat quickly. Coleridge describes it as nothing more than a strong pulse or throb of sensibility. A recent writer has even ventured to explain the conversion as the result of Wesley's disappointed love affair in Georgia. It is amusing to read such explanations. It is ludicrous to say that the condition of Wesley's stomach or pulse can account for the warming of his heart. It is ridiculous to imagine that an attack of indigestion or a shattered romance could cause Wesley to preach, with an hitherto unknown power, the gospel of Jesus for more than fifty years. It has truly been written: "Such a life work could not result from a stupid blunder, and such historic forces could never flow from a disordered stomach."

Something did happen to Wesley that night, but it was not a physical phenomenon. Wesley was changed because he came into vital contact with God; he formed a life companionship with his Saviour. He discovered that night that salvation is through Christ's atonement and not through our own works. He rediscovered on May 24, 1738, the Protestant

doctrine of justification by faith. His experience taught him that vital Christianity is not a deep mystery, but instead a simple faith and trust in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind. His faith was no longer a "speculative, notional, airy shadow which lives in the head and not in the heart." Shortly after his conversion Wesley visited Oxford University where he preached one of his most famous sermons on the text, "By grace ye are saved." From this doctrine of faith Wesley throughout the remainder of his life never wavered.

May 24, 1738, is a sacred date for all Methodists. "On that day," declared Hughes, "Methodism, as history knows it, was born." But it was more than the birthday of Methodism. The historian Lecky writes: "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at the humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history." Wesley's heart had been "strangely warmed," and "the warmth he secured there that night was destined not to be put out until it had kindled a land into flame with its heat."

Wesley at last possessed the fighting spirit of Methodism. When his heart was strangely warmed, there came into his life that religious zeal and energy which has always characterized Methodism. But it was only after he had thrown aside his old methods of salvation that this vital energy came to him. Wesley's life is typical of the subsequent history of Methodism. Methodism has always failed wherever it has depended upon its own works. On the other hand, Methodism has succeeded gloriously wherever it has thrown aside intricate theologies and formalities of religion, and has been true to the primary Methodist doctrine: justification by faith in Jesus Christ. American Methodism needs to go back to the secret of Wesley's power. Oh that many clergymen and laymen might feel their hearts "strangely warmed"! Then there

would come to America a revival like that which swept over England in Wesley's day; a revival that would again cause Methodism to be called "Christianity in earnest." Then it would not be necessary to look only to the past for examples of the fighting spirit of Methodism. It could be seen wherever a Methodist would be found.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CRUSADER

FTER the conversion of Wesley on May 24, 1738, he made a short visit to Germany, from which he returned to London on Saturday, September 16. On the next day he began his life work. "I began again to declare in my own country the glad tidings of salvation, preaching three times," writes Wesley. During the ensuing week he preached eight times. He was setting the pace for his great work.

Wesley now had a vital message, but suddenly he found that the doors of the Anglican Church were closed to him. He was too enthusiastic for the churches of that day. Neither the conservative clergy nor the self-satisfied laity were interested in his doctrine of justification by faith. Wesley could still preach in the jails and speak to the religious societies, but he found that he was not welcome in the pulpits of his own church. The Anglican Church has aptly been called "The Church of Lost Opportunities."

In the meanwhile, George Whitefield, who had been a fellow member with Wesley in the Holy Club at Oxford, was having similar difficulties. When, however, the doors of the Anglican Church were closed to him, Whitefield went to the Kingswood's miners on the outskirts of Bristol, and although it was against the laws of the church to do so, he began to preach in open air services. This experiment proved so successful that Wesley decided to follow Whitefield's example.

April 2, 1739, is, therefore, another sacred date for Methodism since on that day Wesley, despite church laws, preached his first open air sermon. In his diary he wrote, "I submitted to be more vile and, standing on a little grassy mound, preached to a great crowd from the words: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.' " This marked a new day for religion. Wesley now began to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to the masses of England. It was this strategical move which put Wesley in contact with the masses. Many men and women, who never attended church services, now came under the influence of spiritual forces which radiated from Wesley.

After April 2, Wesley became as Gilder writes: "The very soul that over England flamed." He became the great crusader of Methodism. As if driven by some irresistible inner passion, Wesley after his first open air sermon was always on the march. His zeal and fighting spirit knew no abatement. During the remaining fifty-one years of his life, he preached 42,400 sermons, an average of more than fifteen a week; and traveled more than 250,000 miles (or what would be ten times around the globe). He made forty-two journeys to Ireland and twenty-two to Scotland. "It is no exaggeration," writes an eminent historian, "to say that Wesley preached more sermons, rode more miles, worked more hours, printed more books, and influenced more lives than any Englishman of his, or perhaps, of any age." Of his work he never wearied nor faltered. There have been evangelists who have flourished for short periods, but Wesley was an itinerant apostle to the hour of his death. He lived a half century of continuous evangelism, a unique thing in the history of religious revivals.

Wesley's crusading zeal has been the marvel of all times.

He did not need a church building. He preached anywhere, in a meadow near the riverside, in the market-place, on the commons, or, perhaps in a tavern. The elements did not affect Wesley's zeal. He preached in all kinds of weather. At Wrestlingworth he preached by moonlight. Again he preached during rain and hail. At Guisborough he preached in a sun so hot that he recorded that there "was so vehement a stench of stinking fish, as was ready to suffocate me." It bothered him not whether it was cold or hot, wet, or dry. The roads might be good, more often they were bad, and too often there were none at all. Still regardless of circumstances, Wesley was always at his post, morning, noon, and night.

Wesley spoke to thousands instead of hundreds. For him an audience of five thousand people was not unusual. In 1773 he records in his diary: "Preached at Gwennap Pit to about 32,000, the largest assembly I ever preached to, perhaps the first time that a man of seventy has been made to be heard by 30,000 people at once." Wesley cultivated the habit of preaching every morning at five o'clock. Even then he was often awakened long before that hour by the people who assembled to hear him.

When friends advised him and ecclesiastical authorities commanded him to preach only in one parish, Wesley, in words filled with the fighting spirit of Methodism, gave that immortal answer: *"I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far, I mean that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right and my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation."* Upon another occasion when criticised for his itinerant preaching, he replied, "Wherever I see one or a thousand men running into hell, be it in England, Ireland, or France—yea, in Europe, Asia, Africa or America—I will stop them if I can."

The question is asked, how was it possible for Wesley to continue for fifty-one years that crusading zeal? How could he go day after day at such a high nervous and physical tension? What was the secret of his power?

Although Wesley was only five feet, five inches tall, and weighed only one hundred and twenty-two pounds, he possessed a powerful physique. Truly, "he was gifted with a frame of iron and with spirits that never lagged." His health and personal vigor is almost incredible. On his eighty-third birthday he wrote, "I have entered the eighty-third year of my age. I am a wonder to myself. I am never tired, either with preaching, writing, or traveling." When he was eighty-five years old he delivered eighty sermons in eight consecutive weeks, and when eighty-eight he made a visit to Scotland, during which he traveled seventy miles in a single day. "I do not remember," he wrote late in life, "to have felt the lowness of spirits for a quarter of an hour since I was born." He was physically a superman. As the historian Stead has said, "Wesley could never have left so deep and broad an impression on the world without that marvellous body, with muscles of whipcord, and bones of steel, with lungs of leather, and a heart of a lion."

Wesley also learned the secret of serenity. After his conversion he never worried, nor lost a night's sleep. "I feel and grieve," he said, "but by the grace of God I fret at nothing." Truly, "his serenity of temper, which no care could darken and no anxiety disturb, is nothing less than wonderful." Wesley was able to forget the cares and troubles of the past. For example, after a bad trip for several days in rural England, he wrote: "Many a rough journey have I had before, but one like this I never had, between wind and rain, and ice and snow, and driving sleet and piercing cold.

But it is past; these days will return no more and are therefore as though they had never been." "A little more work" was Wesley's advice to those who worried and fretted over the small things of life.

Not only was Wesley the most tireless worker the world has ever known, but he also knew how to conserve his time. He did not waste his spare moments. In order to save time he learned to read on horseback. Instead of an eight hour day, Wesley believed in a seventeen hour day. His hours of work were from five o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night. He did not waste time in idle conversation. Concerning Wesley, the famous Dr. Samuel Johnson wrote, "I hate to meet John Wesley; the dog enchants you with his conversation, and then turns away to go and visit some old woman. This," declared Johnson, "is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have his talk out, as I do." Wesley also found time to be alone, that he might think and meditate. He said, "I never spend less than three hours a day alone."

Wesley was a crusader because he was endowed with spiritual forces. He felt that he was carrying out a divine program and therefore the will of God was given first place in his life. For example, on March 9, 1759, he writes, "How pleasing it would be to flesh and blood to remain in this little quiet place where we have at length weathered the storm. Nay, I am not to consult my own ease, but the advancing of the Kingdom of God." The explanation of Wesley's power lies in the spiritual realm. Of Wesley it has been written: "He had power other than that of the eloquent tongue or logical brain; power that runs back to eternity; that belongs to the spiritual order." When Wesley's heart was strangely warmed, there came to him divine calmness, power, certainty, and authority.

Methodism today needs crusaders, but the cheap oratory and artificial methods of certain evangelists must not be considered as the characteristics of a crusader. Wesley was not a silver-tongued orator, nor did he ever use the sensational methods of certain modern preachers. Yet Wesley was the greatest of all evangelists. He achieved because he put his dependence upon the Eternal One. People beheld in Wesley the incarnation of the spirit of Jesus Christ. Wesley impressed men because of his sincerity. They knew that the saving of souls was his one and only aim in life. "Back to Wesley" should be our slogan; back to the source of his power. Whenever our Methodist Conferences are filled with men whose hearts have been "strangely warmed" and who have only one passion in life, then there will come to Methodism the revival of that crusading spirit which characterized the life of John Wesley.

CHAPTER IX

SMALL BEGINNINGS

METHODISM in the twentieth century has assumed gigantic proportions. The latest statistics show that there are in the world 11,798,185 Methodists and in addition there are millions of Methodist aherents. Since Methodism is so prominent in our own generation it is difficult to conceive of Methodism when it was a small denomination. Nevertheless Methodism had a humble beginning. In order to better appreciate Methodism of today, a study of Methodism in its infancy will be helpful.

Through the agency of Wesley's preaching, thousands were converted. Converts multiplied so rapidly that Wesley became disturbed by the problem of how to care for them adequately. As Wesley moved from place to place he found it impossible to keep in personal contact with his followers. They must of necessity be left behind in an atmosphere uncongenial to spiritual growth. If left alone without religious instruction, the converts might easily drift back into sin, because the Anglican clergy were not concerned with the followers of Wesley. Wesley moreover did not believe in an evangelism which converted sinners and then left them without guidance and oversight. Furthermore the converts looked to Wesley for subsequent spiritual guidance.

Organized Methodism arose from the longing in the minds of men for holiness. Wesley records, "At the latter end of 1739 from eight to ten persons came to me in London who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin. They desired that

I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come." Wesley agreed to meet with them on Thursday evening. On the first Thursday about twelve people came, the next week about forty, and soon there were a hundred. "Thus," writes Wesley, "without any previous plan began the Methodist society in England —a company of people associated together to help each other to work out their own salvation." The first Methodist society was the forerunner of organized Methodism. In a short time another society was formed at Bristol, and thereafter wherever Wesley secured followers they were organized into Methodist societies.

As Methodist societies were soon formed in all parts of England, Wesley found it necessary to formulate a set of regulations for his followers. In 1743 he drew up "The General Rules." There were no technical tests for admission into a Methodist society. According to the rules the only condition required of those who desired admission was a "desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins." Once in the society, Wesley demanded that each member continue to show his desire of salvation in three general ways: first, by doing no harm, second, by doing good, and third, by attending all the ordinances of God. The members of the societies were vitally interested in religion. Wesley described a society as "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

Wesley's "General Rules" are perhaps the best practical guide for the living of a Christian life ever drawn up by human hands. Methodism has found that the simple regula-

tions written by Wesley for his early converts are applicable to modern conditions. Methodism still believes that Christian living consists in doing no harm, in doing good, and by attending all the ordinances of God. These "General Rules" are held in such high favor by Southern Methodism that the General Conference, the highest legislative body of the church, is not allowed to either revoke or change them. They remain as the practical guide for all modern Methodists.

Even with the organization of the societies, it was impossible for Wesley and his helpers to give to the thousands in the societies the sort of oversight their spiritual needs demanded. Wesley realized that there was need for further supervision of the members. But how could he keep in personal touch with each individual member? Obviously he could not be everywhere at the same time, and during his absence trouble arose in the various societies.

It was as a result of a visit to the society at Bristol that a valuable inspiration came to Wesley. In the course of a meeting the members discussed with Wesley methods for the payment of their debt. In the midst of the discussion one of the members arose and said, "Let every member of the society give a penny a week till the debt is paid." He was informed that many were too poor to pay even a penny. "Then," replied the speaker, "put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give anything, well; I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbors weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." The plan was followed. The leaders secured the money and in addition they secured much information about their fellow members. "In a while," writes Wesley, "some of these informed me that they found such

and such a one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately; this is the thing, the very thing, we have wanted so long." Accordingly he divided his societies into small groups, which were called classes. At the head of each group he placed a class leader, who became the supervisor of the class.

In this manner arose the classes, the class leader, and the class meetings. The classes held a meeting once a week. The class leader, who Wesley made responsible for the spiritual oversight of the members, presided. At the class meeting the leader made a public examination of the life of each member, praising, admonishing, or exhorting as the case demanded. The meetings began and ended with prayer and song. The class meetings became spiritual clinics. As the leaders reported their findings to Wesley or his helpers, there was available every week first hand information as to the moral, physical, and financial condition of each individual Methodist. Early Methodism was therefore able immediately to give help to the sick and needy and to reform the backsliders.

The class meeting appears small today, but in it is found a root of the success of Methodism. A Christian brotherhood was thereby developed among the early Methodists. Wesley says, "It can scarcely be conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before." The classes formed the early Methodists into a genuine brotherhood. It linked into a common family men and women, who otherwise were separated by differences of education, social position, and wealth. The class meeting became a counteracting influence against the evils of the hour. Without it "the mere chill of the secular would have killed the newborn spiritual life of the Methodists."

Each new convert when he came into the class meeting found himself one of a group bound by common spiritual aspirations. From the society he received inspiration. This new Christian companionship strengthened the weak and confirmed the strong.

From these facts it can be seen that Methodism began as a Christian brotherhood. There was a binding solidarity among early Methodists. They watched over each other; they advised each one another; they became common burden bearers. The individual Methodist was not lost sight of in the expanding organization. In modern Methodism spiritual supervision has been relegated to the pastor, who too often is not intimately acquainted with his parishioners. In the large churches, many members are virtually unknown by their fellow members. People often fail to find in modern Methodist churches Christian sympathy and companionship, and consequently they drift away. Early Methodists were Christians in earnest because in addition to the possession of a vital religion, they were bound together by ties of Christian brotherhood. Should not our church of the twentieth century have that Christian fellowship of early Methodism? Can there be a fighting Methodism without it?

CHAPTER X

LAYMEN TO THE RESCUE

JOHN WESLEY had the unique experience of seeing the revival which he started become too large for his own strength and energy. Within two years after his heart had been "strangely warmed" he had converted thousands and had organized many Methodist societies in various parts of England. Wesley by his preaching had stirred up such an interest in religious matters that thousands were asking him to preach to them and to guide them along religious lines. It became apparent to Wesley that he alone could not even supervise his own societies, much less preach to the thousands who needed the Gospel. He had either to secure assistants or to confine his efforts to a very small area in England. Still where could he secure helpers? Wesley's original thought had been that the ministers of the Anglican church would help him, but, aside from Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, he received very little aid from the Anglican church. No ordained ministers were available, nor would the Anglican bishops ordain preachers if they were to help Wesley. Wesley had a serious problem to face. With fields ripe for harvest, would there be a failure because of the lack of reapers?

Wesley did secure laborers, but they came from an unusual source. Ordained ministers refused to help save souls in England, but laymen answered Wesley's call. When the conditions were the worst, laymen came to the rescue. It was Methodist laymen who determined that Methodism was

to be a world-wide spiritual organization instead of a small local church. This happened in a very interesting manner. At the end of 1739 Wesley wrote in his journal, "A young man named Thomas Maxfield came and desired to help me as a son of the Gospel. Soon after came another, Thomas Richards, then a third, Thomas Westall. These, severally, desired to serve me as sons, as helpers, when and where I should direct." Wesley gladly accepted them as "helpers" (that is, he permitted them to "exhort" and "expound"). They were allowed to help with the sick and the poor; they could pray with those who asked for prayers; they could give advice to those who desired it; but they were not allowed to preach.

The laymen, however, who had caught that fighting spirit of Methodism wanted to preach as well as to do the semi-ministerial work. This was especially true of Thomas Maxfield who was a helper in the Methodist society in London. As an exhorter he drew large crowds. People gave him earnest and deep attention. Many people came to him for spiritual advice. Naturally he was tempted to preach. Furthermore it was very easy for an exhortation to be turned into a sermon. Hence when Wesley was temporarily absent, Maxfield entered the pulpit and delivered a sermon to the society. The news of this action soon reached Wesley at Bristol. The report upset him. He became angry. He set out at once for London to put a stop to "such nonsense."

It seems inconsistent that Wesley who was begging for preachers should become angry because Maxfield had dared to preach; but it must be remembered that at that time there was a great distinction between a layman and a clergyman. By the Anglican theory of apostolic succession, the clergyman was in direct contact with the early Apostles. When the Anglican bishop in the ordination ceremony placed his hands

upon the head of the candidate, the young man received the same power that Christ had given to the twelve Apostles. He was set apart from the rank and file of the church. Wesley had been trained in this belief. He, as thousands in England, had been taught that only ordained men had the right to stand in the pulpit and to preach. That a mere layman, ordained by nobody, should dare to deliver a formal sermon seemed to Wesley nothing short of a sacrilege.

In great haste Wesley hurried to London in search of Maxfield. Before he could find him, however, he saw his own mother. In a tone of disgust, Wesley said to her, "Thomas Maxfield has turned preacher, I find." It is here that we observe again the wisdom of Susanna Wesley. She was wiser than her distinguished son as she calmly replied to him, "Take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching and hear him yourself." With great reluctance Wesley followed her advice. He listened to Maxfield preach and was convinced that he had been called to preach. Wesley's common sense overcame his early prejudices against lay preaching. The work of the Lord was more important to him than the laws of the Anglican church. Not only did he give Maxfield permission to preach, but he also accepted the services of twenty-two more laymen before the year ended. The number continued to increase until, in 1791, Wesley was using 541 laymen as Methodist preachers.

The sacrificial spirit shown by these laymen will always be one of the high points in Methodism. At first they served without pay. "Take money of no one," Wesley instructed them. "If they give you food when you are hungry, clothes when you want them, it is enough; but not silver nor gold; let there be no pretense for anyone to say that we grow rich

by the Gospel." Provision, however, had to be made for those depending on these lay preachers. So it was decided that the wife of a lay worker should be allowed the sum of ninety-seven cents a week during the absence of her husband from home. Later there was an additional allowance of forty-one cents a week for each child. But the lay preachers! Could they go forever without money? In 1752 this need became so evident that it was decided that each lay preacher should have $58 per annum in order to provide himself with the necessities of life. Unfortunately they suffered untold privations even with this amount. For example, when John Jane died, his belongings were not sufficient to pay his funeral expenses which amounted to $8.90. All the property which he possessed amounted to thirty-two cents; "enough," said Wesley, "for any unmarried preacher of the Gospel to leave to his executors." Of these laymen it has truly been written, "They laid up treasures in heaven but had empty pockets on earth." It was a call to come and suffer that Wesley gave these laymen.

With this extreme sacrificial spirit the laymen helped Wesley turn England back to Christianity. Wesley could never have done his great work without these men. They aided in preaching; they supervised his societies; they cared for the needy. Often they planted the Gospel in advance of Wesley. Even in America it was a layman that preached the first Methodist sermon and organized the first Methodist society. Laymen whose hearts had been "strangely warmed" helped Wesley give vital religion to England. They rescued Methodism from obscurity.

Of course all were denounced and persecuted. They were called in derision "carpenters" and "cobblers" by the Anglican clergy. Wesley was attacked for using unordained

men in his ministry. In reply Wesley challenged the accusers to show one verse of scripture which forbade making use of laymen. He pointed out that Jesus was never ordained in the modern sense of the term. He also called to their attention that people had likewise said of Jesus, "Is not this the carpenter?" When the laymen were denounced as being ignorant men, Wesley replied that they might not know everything, but of the one thing that they professed to know, that is, how to save souls from death, they were not ignorant. Wesley stood loyally by his laymen. "So great a blessing," he writes, "has from the beginning attended the labor of these itinerants that we have been more and more convinced of the more than lawfulness of this proceeding."

Without the help of laymen there can be no fighting spirit of Methodism. In Southern Methodism there are only 8,348 ordained preachers. These ministers are the leaders of the 2,630,538 members of our church. They need help today just as badly as Wesley did years ago. Southern Methodism is calling for laymen to serve as local preachers, religious education workers, Sunday school officers, consecrated stewards, and as members of official boards. If laymen of Wesley's day gave both their time and money to the cause, should not our laymen be willing to give at least one-tenth of their income to the Lord's work? When Methodism faced a crisis in 1739 laymen came nobly to the rescue. *They had the fighting spirit of Methodism.* Now, as Methodism faces the problems and crises of the twentieth century, will our laymen come to the rescue?

CHAPTER XI

ORGANIZED FOR CONQUEST

JOHN WESLEY was a great organizer and commander. He believed in system. If he had entered military service he no doubt would have been as great a general as was his kinsman, the Duke of Wellington. Instead he used his genius for organization in the field of religion and thereby developed the most efficient ecclesiastical polity in Christendom. Wesley was willing to admit that some good might result from the use of haphazard methods in religious work, but he knew that in order to drive sin from England an efficient organization was necessary. So when laymen volunteered, Wesley accepted them as lay preachers, but he placed them under marching orders. He created a spiritual army for the conquest of evil in England.

Wesley believed in an itinerant ministry. He did not favor long pastorates. He wanted his preachers to be moving from place to place. Wesley determined upon this policy partly because most of his lay preachers were untrained men. Since they preached at least twice a day Wesley felt that they would soon exhaust their message. He declared that it hurt both the preacher and the people to stay six or eight weeks together in one place. "Be their talents ever so great," he said of the preachers, "they will ere long grow dead themselves, and so will most of them that hear them." Although Wesley could attract thousands by his preaching, yet he feared that his sermons would grow stale if he remained too long in one town. For example, he wrote, "I know were I my-

self to preach one whole year in one place I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep." Wesley furthermore knew that there were different types of preachers and various kinds of congregations. "Nor can I believe," stated Wesley, "it was ever the will of our Lord that any congregation should have one teacher only. This preacher has one talent, that another. No one whom I ever knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation." Even if his preachers had been university graduates Wesley would have adopted the itinerant system.

Early Methodism, therefore, began with an active itinerancy. It was Wesley's original custom to change the preachers every eight weeks. Later the period was increased but never during his lifetime did Wesley favor a preacher laboring on the same circuit more than three years. By this itinerant system Wesley handled the movements of his helpers in a military fashion. The right man was placed in the right place. Wesley firmly believed in the itinerancy. "We have found," he wrote late in life, "by long and continued experience that a frequent change of preachers is best."

No army ever marched under stricter orders than did the early Methodist preachers. As they were soldiers engaged in a great spiritual campaign, Wesley prepared a minute set of regulations for their conduct. The following briefly stated are some of the commands by which Wesley governed his preachers: 1. Sleep not more than you need. 2. Talk not more than you need. 3. As often as possible rise at four o'clock in the morning. 4. Rarely spend above an hour at a time conversing with any one. 5. Use the most common words which our language affords. 6. Do not scream when preaching. 7. Do not hold a service more than an hour. 8. Spend

two or three minutes every hour in earnest prayer. 9. Choose the plainest texts possible. 10. Sing no hymn of your own composing. 11. Beware of affected gesture, pronunciation, and airs. 12. Never disappoint a congregation. 13. Spend at least five hours in twenty-four in study. 14. Never be unemployed a moment. 15. Never be triflingly employed. 16. Believe evil of no one unless you see it done. 17. Put the best construction on everything. 18. Speak evil of no one. 19. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel.

These regulations are very simple, but they embody much good advice. They can be followed with profit by modern Methodist preachers. With hundreds of preachers obeying such instructions it is not difficult to see why early Methodism grew so rapidly in England.

Wesley decided that an annual assemblage of his helpers was necessary in order to efficiently conduct his religious campaign. So on June 25, 1744, in answer to Wesley's call, ten Methodist preachers met with Wesley in London. For a week they remained in conference. Wesley presided at the meeting. A secretary kept the minutes which at the close of the conference were printed and distributed among the Methodist societies. The preachers gave reports of their work. Plans were made for the work of the next year. The appointments were made at this meeting. This was the first annual conference in Methodism. It became the regulating center for Methodism. Little did Wesley realize in 1744 that he was starting an institution that is now found wherever Methodism is located.

With the growth of Methodism Wesley was soon unable to personally guide the work of all his preachers. To remedy this situation he assigned the supervision of small groups of

preachers to experienced helpers, whom he called "assistants." Under Wesley the assistant had a general oversight over all the preachers and societies in a certain defined district of England. He supervised the work of the preachers and then reported on the status of conditions to Wesley. The assistant took Wesley's place in his absence.

Wesley also had a period of probation for his preachers. No man was allowed to enter the Methodist itinerancy unless he first had the approval of his own local society. He was then examined by Wesley or a committee of preachers. If the applicant passed satisfactorily the examination he was appointed for one year as a lay preacher. After four years of service if he was still acceptable he was admitted by Wesley and the other preachers into full connection.

Wesley builded better than he had ever dreamed or hoped. Methodist polity has undergone very few important changes since the day of Wesley. In place of Wesley as chief executive, there are now the Methodist bishops; while the presiding elder holds the place once held by the assistant. The itinerant system with a few alterations still remains. The annual conference has become a fixture in Methodism. Minutes of the annual conferences are published every year for the information of the members of the church. Candidates for the Methodist ministry must first be recommended by the local quarterly conference before they come before a committee of the annual conference. If they pass satisfactorily the entrance examination, they are then placed on trial until they satisfy the rules for admission into full connection. The Methodist Discipline takes the place of the early regulations issued by Wesley for the guidance of his lay preachers.

Recently there has arisen considerable criticism of the Methodist plan of organization. Unfortunately the criticism

has come from within Methodism, especially from preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is charged that the bishops have too much power; that the presiding elder is no longer necessary; and that the itinerancy is not applicable to modern conditions. But who are these critics? Are they not usually those men, who, on account of their inefficiency or laziness, have failed to secure the better appointments and higher positions in the church? The ecclesiastical polity of Methodism is then blamed for their disappointments.

The aforesaid type of criticism is unfair. It will be admitted that occasionally there may be a bishop who is a very poor successor of John Wesley and who abuses the power entrusted to him. It is also true there have been some presiding elders who instead of improving and leading their districts serve in a perfunctory and often lazy manner. But the Methodist system is not to be destroyed if occasionally there is a misfit. There is no organization, whether in business or in religion, that functions perfectly. Place the axe at the root of the trouble. Methodism does not need a new ecclesiastical polity, but Methodism does need more consecrated and better trained leaders who can efficiently and democratically hold the offices in the Methodist system. The solution is always to be found by placing good men in the important positions. A Methodist bishop does not have too much power; only put a modern John Wesley in that office. Instead of making the presiding eldership an easy berth for the men who have failed as pastors, put in that office preachers with spiritual vision; ministers who are natural leaders and organizers of men.

There are critics who say that under the Methodist scheme of organization the life of the Methodist preacher is too hard and strenuous. Oh, that this charge might be more true, for

then none but the brave, heroic, and consecrated men would enter the Methodist ministry. In the day of John Wesley there were no easy positions in Methodism. It has truly been said, "Never did a body of men work more diligently, fare harder, and receive smaller pay in earthly coin than did the first generation of Methodist preachers." One order which Wesley sent to his preachers was, "*You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in the work.*" A Methodist preacher whose only aim is to save souls finds the Methodist organization his great ally. On the other hand those preachers who have so many diverse aims in life naturally find the bishops and presiding elders a constant source of annoyance. "That fighting spirit" of Methodism fits into John Wesley's ecclesiastical polity. Our marvellous growth is the best proof of the value of the Methodistical system.

CHAPTER XII

THE MOTHER CHURCH OF METHODISM

N APRIL 2, 1739, John Wesley preached his first sermon in the open air. Since he had no church of his own, he continued this practice during the ensuing spring and summer. Although, in England, it is possible to have outdoor preaching during the summer, the winter necessitates a shelter for a religious service. Wesley realized this fact. He knew that a church building would be needed for his work during the winter, but he had no money nor any apparent way of obtaining money since most of his followers were very poor. This was the situation which Wesley faced, when from an unexpected source came an offer of help.

In the autumn of 1739 two men, by the names of Watkins and Ball, approached Wesley and offered to lease him a building in which he could hold his religious services in London. The building was an old foundry, formerly used by the British government for the manufacture of cannon. In 1716 there had occurred in this foundry an explosion which had blown off the roof, and had greatly damaged the interior of the building. The government had then abandoned the foundry and for more than twenty years it had remained unused. Wesley described it as nothing more than a "vast, uncouth heap of ruins." This building Watkins and Ball offered to Wesley for the sum of $575.

When Wesley hesitated to accept the offer because of his lack of funds, Watkins and Ball offered to loan him the

money necessary for this undertaking. They also agreed to make yearly subscriptions to Wesley until the debt had been liquidated. Thus it was that in the fall of 1739 Wesley for the sum of $575 secured a long time lease upon the old foundry. Having procured the building, Wesley began at once to transform it into an edifice suitable for religious purposes. He made extensive repairs and alterations. Part of the building was converted into a chapel having a seating capacity of fifteen hundred persons, while the remainder of it was made into what would now be called Sunday school rooms. Wesley expended about $4,000 in changing this abandoned building into "The First Methodist Church."

The "Foundry" as it was henceforth called was first used for divine worship on Sunday, November 11, 1739. On that evening Wesley preached the first sermon ever delivered in the old cannon factory. He took very appropriately as his text: "Oh, hasten thou the time when nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "Soon," as a contemporary author states it, "the echoes of prayer and praise succeeded the clang of anvils and the roar of furnaces." For the next thirty-nine years the Foundry was the headquarters of English Methodism. It was the "mother church" of Methodism.

The first church of Methodism had an humble beginning, but it was perhaps the most remarkable of all Methodist churches. It is doubtful if there is a Methodist church today that can compare favorably with our mother church. In its scope and program it was almost ideal. Let us notice how the mother church has been an inspiration and example for all succeeding Methodist churches.

The mother church of Methodism stressed vital religion. People did not attend services at the Foundry because it was a

beautiful building. It had little if any aesthetic appeal. Silas Todd described the Foundry as "a ruinous place with an old pantile covering." The pulpit of the church was made of a few rough boards. Neither were the people attracted to the Foundry because of pulpit sensationalism. They came because it was a church where a vital religious message might be heard. John Wesley preached gospel sermons to his hearers. His constant theme was salvation by faith, preceded by repentance, and followed by holiness. Evangelism was carried on with such great success that additions were constantly being made to the membership of the Foundry.

The mother church of Methodism had a liberal theology. Membership was not based upon subscription to any ancient creed. In contrast to neighboring Baptist churches that demanded a belief in immersion as the correct method of baptism; in contrast to the Presbyterian churches that stressed predestination; in contrast to the Anglican church that believed in the theory of apostolic succession, Wesley required of those who wanted to become members of the Foundry, only "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." The Foundry was a church free of theological disputes. Wesley said, "We do not lay the main stress of our religion on any opinions, right or wrong; neither do we begin, nor willingly join in, any dispute concerning them."

The mother church was a witnessing church. Although there were no theological tests of membership in the Foundry, there were practical tests for every member. A member of the Foundry was required to show his Christian spirit in three ways: first, "By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind"; second, "By doing good"; third, "By attending upon all the ordinances of God." The laymen of the Foundry were living witnesses of the power of Jesus Christ.

The Foundry was a democratic church. It held to the views of Wesley that, regardless of the social inequalities of the day, all men were equal in the sight of God. Especially did Wesley feel that all should have an equal status in the house of God. There were no reserved seats in the Foundry and every bench was of the same construction. "None were suffered to call any place their own," says Wesley, "but the first comers sat down first." Membership in the Foundry ranged from the poor to the rich; from the lowest classes of London society to the aristocracy.

Laymen were active in the mother church. Instead of having to beg the laymen to help, they volunteered their services. It was from the Foundry that the lay preacher idea arose. The Foundry had been organized only a short time when Thomas Maxfield, a layman, offered his services to Wesley. He was allowed to be a helper at the Foundry, but such work did not satisfy his zeal. His desire for a larger field of labor caused him to preach. So it was that the first lay minister of Methodism came from the Foundry.

The mother church of Methodism felt that it had a social obligation to fulfill. It was a home missionary church, interested in the conditions of the poor unfortunate classes of London society. As early as 1741, each member decided to give weekly a penny for the relief of the poor and sick. In order to help the people who were unemployed, an employment bureau was opened in one room of the Foundry. In another room there was a lending society which loaned money up to the amount of twenty-five dollars to the poor people of London. In a house near the Foundry a certain number of widows were cared for at the expense of the members of the Foundry. In another house orphans found refuge. Neither did the members of the mother church forget the sick people

of London. There was a dispensary in the Foundry to which the poor people could come for free medicine and free medical advice. The Foundry was a church that helped men and women seven days of the week.

The mother church of Methodism did not omit an educational program. A part of the building was fitted with desks and was used during the week as a school room. Here two teachers taught the neglected boys of London. Another room known as "The Book Room" was opened for the sale of Wesley's publications and other good books.

The mother church of Methodism was a growing church. It began with a charter membership of twelve persons. When Wesley made up the first church roll there were already about one hundred members. In another year the number had grown to three hundred. The church auditorium which held fifteen hundred people was too small to contain the crowds which came to the services. Many were constantly being turned away. In 1768 Wesley enlarged the Foundry so that it might hold several hundred more people. Ten years later the membership of the mother church felt the need of larger and more up-to-date quarters. Hence in 1778 they built City Road Chapel which is still standing. Thirty-nine years before, the membership was unable to raise $4,000 for the old foundry. Now the City Road Chapel was built at the cost of $30,000.

How does your church compare with the mother church of Methodism? Is it a church where vital religion holds first place? Is it free from theological disputes? Does it witness for Jesus Christ? Is it democratic? What about the laymen in your church? Does your church minister to the sick, the poor, and the needy? Does it have an educational program? Is it a growing church? Does it have the fighting spirit of the mother church of Methodism?

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRICE OF A GREAT CAUSE

ENGLAND today is proud to number John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, as one of her greatest sons. In Westminster Abbey there has been placed a bronze tablet in memory of Wesley. But what a contrast is the story of his life! It is one of the ironies of history to know that the same man whom after his death England honored was, in his lifetime, persecuted by his fellow citizens. John Wesley was a "prophet without honor" in his own country. The Methodism which saved England from a French Revolution was at one time considered a national disgrace. Early Methodism was not appreciated in the land of its birth.

It would seem that the spiritual leaders of eighteenth century England would have welcomed the Methodist revival. Instead Methodism was one of the greatest of the "Lost Opportunities" of the Anglican Church. Although the Anglican Church needed such a revival as Wesley started, it refused to make use of its gifted son; it did not care for the Methodist enthusiasm. This church of culture and tradition feared that Wesley's actions would humiliate it. Field preaching, the use of laymen as preachers, and other like innovations could not be tolerated by the aristocratic Anglican churchmen who had no place for the men who ignored precedents and broke ecclesiastical regulations. In the beginning the church looked only with disdain upon Wesley and his followers, but with the rapid growth of Methodism, the Anglican bishops began to

seriously attack it. Orders were sent to the preachers to oppose the Methodists, describing them as a "reproach not only to our church and country but to human nature itself." The Bishop of London in a fifty-five page pastoral letter devoted two-thirds of the space to a denunciation of the Methodists.

The subordinate clergy feared to offend the bishops by being friendly to the Methodists. The great majority, therefore, fell in line with their bishops in an attack upon the Methodists. Soon, as one historian records: "Vicars, deans, curates, rectors, chaplains, and bishops issued forth with sermons, pastorals, and tractates abusing the Methodists and warning the people against them." Especially in sermons did the priests arouse the people against the Methodists. At Saint Ives in 1743 Wesley attended an Anglican service in which the rector spoke of the Methodists as "enemies of the church, seducers, troublers, scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites." At Wednesbury he listened to a curate preach a sermon on the Methodists, using as his text, "Beware of the false prophets." Howell Harris, a lay preacher, heard himself pointed out by the rector as a "minister of the devil, an enemy of God, an enemy to the church and all mankind." When Wesley returned to his home church in Epworth he was refused Holy Communion by a drunken curate who informed Wesley that he was not fit to receive the sacrament. Upon one occasion when Wesley's brother, Charles, went to the altar to receive the sacrament, the rector cried out loudly, "Avant, Satan, avant." As aptly stated, Methodism "was everywhere spoken against." All the people of England soon learned about the Methodists.

The Anglican ministers were aided in their persecution of the Methodists by the mobs and magistrates of England. There was no trouble to raise a mob from the unemployed,

uneducated and immoral men of eighteenth century England. For them an attack upon Methodists was even more exciting than their accustomed sports. The Anglican priests therefore incited the lower classes to do violence to the Methodists. The Anglican preacher of Tealby openly asserted that he was raising a mob in order "to give the finishing strokes to the Methodists." Since the magistrates were usually ardent Anglicans they took no action to protect the Methodist preachers from the mobs. They not only neglected their duty but also in some cases arrested and punished the Methodists on the charge of starting the riots.

John Wesley suffered many personal injuries for the cause of Methodism. In his journal there are to be found many accounts of the harsh treatment which he received from the mobs of England. While preaching at Saint Ives he received a severe blow on the head. Wesley wrote from Leeds: "I preached at five. As we went home a great mob followed and threw whatever came to hand. I was struck several times, once or twice in the face." After another scene of violence, he wrote: "God brought me safe to Wednesbury, having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands." During another sojourn at Wednesbury, Wesley records that "one man struck me on the breast with all his might and the other on the mouth with such force that blood gushed out immediately." Upon one occasion a gun was fired through a window into his bedroom.

If the rabble showed no respect for Wesley, they cared less for the lay preachers. A mob captured Thomas Lee at Pately, rolled him in a sewer, then dragged him to a bridge and threw him into the river. Peter Jaco at Warrington was struck so violently on his breast with a brick that blood came out of his mouth, nose and ears. At Ackham the mob captured John

Nelson and as recorded, "He was knocked down eight times. As he lay on the ground, not able to get up, they dragged him by the hair of his head upon the stones for twenty yards, kicking him on the sides and thighs as they went along. Then six of them stood on his body and thighs in order 'to tread the Holy Ghost out of him.' " For at least fifty years the Methodist lay preachers suffered gross indignities for the cause of Methodism. Some were injured for life, a few died from their wounds, while all endured the general persecution.

Converts to Methodism also suffered physical violence. Attacks were made upon their homes. The breaking of window-panes in Methodist homes was so prevalent that in certain places it was possible to recognize the homes of the Methodists by the condition of the windows. In February, 1744, at Wednesbury a gang drove all the Methodists from their homes and then proceeded to damage their property. On such occasions Methodist women were often treated disgracefully by the mob. Thousands of early Methodist converts received bodily injuries.

A popular method of persecution was to break up Methodist meetings. Many devices were used for this purpose. At Great Gardens a herd of cows was driven through the audience, while at Penzance an army officer ordered his soldiers to march through the congregation. A group of boys was hired at Epworth to shout loudly enough to drown out Wesley's voice. At Saint Ives a man was engaged to ride his horse to and fro through the midst of the people. Wesley refused to preach in a certain yard at Pocklinton because the yard was "plentifully furnished with stones; artillery," as Wesley said, "ready for the devil's drunken champions." A Durham mob brought an engine which threw water on the congregation.

There were also discriminations made against the early Methodists. A gardener who had served his master for fifty years was discharged for "hearing the Methodists." At Charlton the farmers made an agreement to give no work to any who went to hear Methodist preachers. At Horrnberry a landlord evicted all Methodists from his houses. Joseph Periam was placed in an insane asylum by his father for "being Methodistically mad."

False rumors were spread about the Methodists. It was charged that Wesley was a Roman Catholic. It was also rumored that he was in the pay of the Spanish government. Innumerable tales were invented about the immorality of the early Methodists. Barr writes truly: "If Methodists had been guilty of one-half of the outrages, corruption, and crimes of which they were accused it would have been very easy to rid the nation of them."

The influence of the press was turned against Methodism. Between 1737 and 1778 there were 606 important publications issued against the Methodists. Bishops and eminent authors vied with the hack writers in an attempt to damage John Wesley and his early followers.

The hatred of Methodists was carried to Oxford University where the Methodist boys became objects of ridicule for their fellow students. Ridicule was only a minor persecution. Candidates for university prizes were required to sign a paper renouncing "the practices and purposes of the people called Methodists." As late as 1768 six students were expelled from Oxford for holding "Methodistical tenets."

The Roman Catholics also attacked the Methodists. In England where they were in the minority their hatred was not felt, but in Ireland where they were powerful, the early Methodists suffered. There the Irish priests preached against

the Methodists and encouraged mob violence. So harsh was the treatment received from the Irish Catholics that Wesley wrote: "That any of the Methodist preachers were alive is a clear proof of an overruling Providence."

These persecutions might have destroyed some movements but not Methodism. In fact Methodism grew under such treatment. The bravery of John Wesley won for him the admiration of the people. He never ran away from a mob nor was he ever frightened. He made it a rule "always to look a mob in the face." His calm demeanor in the face of danger caused men who came for the purpose of harming him to remain and protect him. The false rumors which were started to hurt Methodism proved to be an excellent advertisement. Methodism was so talked about that a crowd was always ready to see and hear the Methodist preachers. Furthermore persecution never checked the ardor of the preachers. If driven from a town, they would immediately return with more helpers. Sincerity always makes an appeal. The people saw that John Wesley and his followers were willing to suffer for their beliefs. The masses slowly came to understand that the Methodist preachers were working for the welfare of humanity. The persecutions served another good end; they brought into the early Methodist ranks only the worthy and sincere people.

Gradually the persecution spent itself. By 1783 the tide had turned so much in Wesley's favor that he had more invitations to preach in Anglican churches than he could accept. Former persecutors often became the champions of Methodism. When the much abused lay preacher, John Nelson, died in 1774 "his remains were carried through the streets of Leeds, attended by thousands who were either weeping or crying." Before Wesley's death he wondered if the shame of the cross

had ceased. Referring to his growing popularity Wesley said, "It seems, after being scandalous nearly fifty years, I am at length growing into an honorable man."

Early Methodism faced and overcame criticism and persecution. Such was the great price paid by the first generation of Methodists that our church might exist today. Are the Methodists of the twentieth century made of the same stuff as were the early Methodists? In the face of the present day criticism and subtle cynicism are we showing that fighting spirit of Methodism? Shall Southern Methodists be adversely affected by the modern anti-religious propaganda? If we are, by what right do we consider ourselves worthy successors of John Wesley and the first generation of Methodists?

CHAPTER XIV

FACING THE ISSUES

JOHN WESLEY, the founder of Methodism, did not believe in compromising with sin. Instead of winking at the vices, the sins, the political corruption, and the social injustices of his day, Wesley openly and squarely faced these national issues. At a time when it was very difficult to stand for the great moralities of life, Wesley gave to Methodism and the world an example of true Christian citizenship.

Drunkenness was one of the greatest vices of eighteenth century England. The use of intoxicating liquors was almost as common then as the present use of tea and coffee. The consumption of alcohol was so prevalent that there was no opposition to it from the church circles of England. Many of the Anglican clergy drank liquors and some of them even derived financial benefits from the sale thereof. Drunkenness was an accepted characteristic of eighteenth century England.

John Wesley, however, refused to be quiet on this subject. He became a pioneer in the movement for temperance reform. He began first with his own followers. In the General Rules which Wesley issued in 1743, he forbade the members of the Methodist societies to drink, buy, or sell spirituous liquors. *This was the first rule regarding prohibition ever adopted by an ecclesiastical organization.* This regulation proved to be more than a formality. For example during January and February, 1743, Wesley expelled nine-

teen members from the Methodist society at Newcastle for drunkenness and for the sale of intoxicating drinks.

In sermons and pamphlets Wesley severely denounced the distilling of liquors. In 1772 in a paper on "Thoughts upon the Present Scarcity of Provisions," Wesley showed that one-half of the grain of England was distilled into alcohol, or what Wesley termed "liquid fire." "It would be better for England," Wesley declared, "that half the grain crop should be thrown into the sea, rather than convert it into deadly poison." Riches gained by the liquor traffic, Wesley termed "blood money." In an article entitled, "A Word to the Drunkard," Wesley appealed to the manhood of the drunkard. He wrote: "Are you a man? God made you a man, but you made yourself a beast. Never call yourself a man. You are beneath the greater part of the beasts that perish." The opposition to alcohol of Wesley and his followers soon made itself felt. Alehouse keepers became the most determined enemies of early Methodism. A convert to Methodism meant one less customer for those robbers of mankind.

Wesley was again in advance of his day in his opposition to the slave trade. During the eighteenth century the merchants and financiers of England were making large fortunes by furnishing negro slaves for the planters of North and South America. There was no public opinion against the slave trade. There was no opposition from the Anglican church. But Wesley could not remain silent in the face of this injustice. Fifteen years before the Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade was organized in England, Wesley protested against what he termed as "that execrable sum of all villainies." Not only did he attack the slave trade, but he also denounced "the shocking abomination of slavery itself." "Liberty," declared Wesley, "is the right of every

human creature as soon as he breathes the vital air, and no human law can deprive him of that right."

In his sermons Wesley thundered against slavery and the slave trade. When the champions of the slave trade declared that negro slaves were necessary in the West Indies because the white men were unable to work in that hot climate, Wesley replied: "It were better that all those islands were altogether sunk in the depth of the sea than that they should be cultivated at so high a price as the violation of justice, mercy, and truth." When told that the slave trade was essential to the commercial prosperity of England, he answered, "Better no trade than trade procured by villainy. . . Better is honest poverty than all the riches brought by the tears, and sweat, and blood of our fellow creatures." The last letter which Wesley ever wrote was a letter of encouragement to William Wilberforce, who was fighting in Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade. To him he wrote: "Go on in the name of God and in the power of his might till even American slavery shall vanish away."

Wesley was opposed to war. At a time when England was making great military conquests in India and America; when feats of arms and military heroes were glorified, Wesley remained a follower of the Prince of Peace. He hated war because it was destructive of God's work. "Whenever war breaks out," deplored Wesley, "God is forgotten, if he is not set at open defiance." Because of his contacts with the lower classes of people, from whence came the privates, Wesley saw the inglorious side of war. Daily he mingled with the by-products of militarism—destitute widows, desolate orphans and ruined manhood. He realized the futility of trying to settle disputes by war. In an address during the American Revolution, he drew a vivid picture of the

English and Americans (children of the same parents) deciding to murder each other to see who was in the right regarding the mode of taxation. Sarcastically he ejaculated: "Now what an argument this is! What a method of proof! What an amazing way of deciding controversies!" War, according to Wesley, had no place in civilization. Concerning it he asked, "Now who can reconcile war, I will not say to religion, but to any degree of reason or common sense?"

Wesley was not afraid to attack the political inequalities of his day. It was a national disgrace, Wesley contended, that only five per cent of the men in England had the right to vote. "By what right," he questioned, "do you exclude a man from being one of the people because he has not forty shillings a year? Is he not a man, whether he be rich or poor? Has he not a soul and a body?" Wesley also favored woman suffrage. "I ask," he inquired, "by what argument do you prove that women are not naturally as free as men? Are they not rational creatures?" Wesley endeavored to arouse public opinion against the prevalent system of bribery at elections. He urged all Methodists who had the right to vote to be present at all elections, but to vote "without fee or reward for the person they judged most worthy." He demanded that the voters take more seriously their right of suffrage. He advised each voter to act as if the whole election depended on his single vote.

Wesley opposed and bitterly attacked all of the other vices of England, such as disrespect for the Sabbath, swearing and dueling. Space does not permit a discussion of Wesley's policy toward each issue, but enough facts have been given to show how he frankly faced the national problems of his day. He was found in opposition to anything that was a menace to religion, to justice, to morality, and to national happiness.

John Wesley was always on the side of righteousness. He was a Christian citizen.

Since the day of Wesley, Methodism has been noted for its championship of high principles of morality and for its opposition to vice, autocracy, and corruption in national life. Methodism today, as in the time of Wesley, stands for a world free from alcohol; for a world in which slavery of all types is no more; for a world wherein universal peace shall supplant war; for a world in which there are no political or social injustices.

Because Wesley dared to stand for these great moral and religious principles, he was severely criticised. The forces of evil attacked him and endeavored to blacken his reputation. That same policy is pursued today. Modern Methodists are denounced whenever they become too earnest in their attack upon national evils. The Methodists are singled out for criticism by the forces of alcohol in America. Whenever a Methodist preacher champions political reforms, the professional politicians cry out that the Methodist church is mixing in politics. When a Methodist minister denounces war, the militarist at once stigmatizes him as a traitor to his country. We are called religious fanatics because we dare to demand that all phases of life, both private and public, must be controlled by Christian principles.

A man who has the fighting spirit of Methodism will not be affected by this criticism. Notice the case of the founder of Methodism. So bitter were the attacks upon John Wesley that his brother, Charles Wesley, begged him to reply to these critics. After listening to this appeal, John calmly replied: *"Brother, when I devoted to God my case, my time, my life, did I except my reputation?"* Oh that more modern Methodists might have Wesley's attitude!

CHAPTER XV

"UNTO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE"

HERE have been in the past, and, unfortunately, there are still in the present, many Christians who feel that their more or less regular attendance at divine services plus their small contributions to the current expenses of the local church fulfill all their religious obligations. No true follower of John Wesley, however, can share this opinion; because Wesley gave to Methodism a broader and nobler conception of true religion. As Wesley aptly said: "If a man would serve God whom he has not seen, he must serve man whom he has seen." By his preaching Wesley gave spiritual aid to the needy of his day. He did not, however, stop there but rather questioned himself: "What else? Do they not need also food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, assistance in their business?" As he surveyed the many economic hardships of his day, his answer came in the conviction that in addition to spiritual aid (which Wesley always gave first), religion consisted also in giving food to the hungry, in furnishing clothing to the naked, and in visiting the sick and those in prison. His humanitarian spirit soon attracted so much attention that Wesley was asked to explain the rule by which he lived. He replied by quoting his motto of life:

"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,

In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
As long as ever you can,
As you journey once down the road of life."

As a member of the Holy Club, Wesley had visited the prisoners in the jails of Oxford. Now with a heart that had been "strangely warmed," his sympathies went out more than ever to these unfortunate outcasts of society. In fact, the first person to whom Wesley offered salvation by faith was a prisoner under the sentence of death. It became Wesley's custom to visit the jails that he might preach to and pray with the prisoners. Between September, 1738, and June, 1739, he made sixty-seven visits to the jails in London, Bristol, and Oxford. He was welcomed by the prisoners. Frequently he accompanied the condemned men as they were taken to the gallows. Wesley's interest in the prisoners was an unheard of thing; it was a new kind of religious and social service in eighteenth century England.

Wesley's aid to the prisoners went far beyond his own visits to the jails. His preachers were urged to converse with the prisoners. At the Methodist conference of 1778, in response to the question, "Is it not advisable for us to visit all the jails we can?" the reply was, "By all means. There cannot be a greater charity." Wesley wrote articles in which he gave publicity to the inhuman conditions under which the prisoners lived. He preached "charity sermons," at which times collections were taken for the poor prisoners. Although Wesley was never able personally to change the deplorable prison conditions, yet he did encourage and inspire John Howard, the great prison reformer of England. Of Wesley, Howard wrote, "I was encouraged by him to go on vigorously with my own designs. I saw in him how much a single man

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
MAY 2 1932

might achieve by zeal and perseverance; and I thought, 'Why may I not do as much in my way as Mr. Wesley has done in his?'"

Wesley's contact with the masses gave him, perhaps, a better conception of the social conditions of England than that held by any other man of his day. He soon learned that the majority of the poor people were constantly ill from smallpox, fever and other epidemics; and that because of the lack of money, medicine, and medical knowledge, thousands were at the mercy of such diseases. Wesley was touched by the conditions which he found. His tender loving spirit went out to the sick people of England. He realized that here was a field for Christian service.

Wesley began to visit the sick, but this task he soon found too large for one man. Hence in order that there might be a systematic visitation of the sick, he turned to the Methodist societies for helpers. Wesley divided the city of London into twenty-three districts and appointed two Methodists in each district to visit and care for the infirm. Wesley also instructed his preachers to visit those who were ill. Early Methodism soon became known for its visitations in homes of sickness.

In the second place Wesley helped the sick by giving them medical assistance. Ever since his college days Wesley had been interested in medical science. Therefore, when he saw that the poor people were unable to secure medical aid, he decided to prepare and administer the medicine himself. At the Foundry, the early Methodist headquarters in London, Wesley opened in 1747 the first free medical dispensary in the world. Here medicine was distributed gratuitously to the poor sick people. The experiment proved of so much value that Wesley started another one at Bristol. Soon Wesley could report: "Our number of patients increase in Bristol daily.

We have now upwards of two hundred." Naturally the physicians and apothecaries attacked Wesley for hurting their business. He was charged with working in a field of which he was ignorant. To this Wesley replied, "I do not know that any one patient yet has died under my hands."

In addition to the service given by the dispensaries, Wesley in 1745 broadened the scope of his work by issuing a small book entitled, "A Collection of Receipts for the Use of the Poor." This book he sold for the small price of two pence. This was followed in June, 1747, by Wesley's "Primitive Physic; or An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases." This latter book, being devoid of technical terms and written in a simple, readable language, immediately had a large sale. Thirty-two editions were published, the last edition being printed as late as 1828. The remedies were generally of a simple nature. The book contained, of course, many remedies which modern science has discredited, but its value to the thousands of destitute people of eighteenth century England cannot be overestimated.

The poor people of England received Wesley's attention. He understood their problem because in his home at Epworth there had been a continual struggle with poverty. Memories of his early days brought him into the deepest sympathy with the poor and needy. He did not hold the usual view that people are poor simply because they are lazy. He, instead, realized that there are economic reasons which are often responsible for poverty. Still, regardless of why people were poverty-stricken, Wesley longed to help them.

Wesley in many ways helped the destitute people of England. He tried to secure employment for them. At one time, during a severe economic crisis, he even turned part of the Foundry, the First Methodist church, into a workhouse, where

work was given to unemployed. In order to save men and women from the clutches of the pawn brokers, Wesley started a loan fund in 1745, from which poor people could borrow for a period of three months sums of money ranging from fifty cents to twenty-five dollars. He wrote pamphlets to enlighten public opinion regarding the condition of the poor. In his "Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions," he vividly described the misery of the indigent people of England.

Wesley gave money and clothing to the poor. After he had given all that he could, he asked the members of the Methodist societies to contribute a penny a week for the relief of the unfortunate people. The members of the London society were directed "to bring what clothes each could spare to distribute among those that wanted most." He established bread lines for the hungry of London. Of this service the London Evening Mail said, "Great numbers of poor people had peas, pottage and barley broth given them at the Foundry, at the expense of Mr. Wesley." One of the most inspiring scenes in Wesley's life is to see him when eighty-two years of age, white-haired and somewhat bent in stature, tramping through the snow covered streets of London for five days in succession in order to beg $1,000 with which to clothe and feed the poor people. Of this experience he writes: "It was hard work, as most of the streets were filled with melting snow, which often lay ankle deep; so that my feet were steeped in snow water from morning to evening. I held out pretty well till Saturday evening."

Wesley did not forget the widows, orphans and strangers. Upon observing that there were many "feeble aged widows," Wesley established about 1748 in London a home for widows. He started another home for orphans. "Stranger's Friend Societies," composed of Methodist laymen, were organized by

Wesley to take care of the foreigners who lacked friends and often food and clothing.

It has been estimated that Wesley gave to the needy in England during his lifetime about $200,000. The question will be asked, where did Wesley secure so much money? His income came from his publications. He tells us: "Two and forty years ago, having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper and shorter books than any I had ever seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny apiece. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of, and by this means I unawares became rich." Wesley used his large income to help the needy classes of society. As a student at Oxford University he had learned that it was possible to live upon $140 a year, and for the rest of his life he endeavored to clothe and feed himself upon this amount. No matter how much his income was, he annually gave away all that was not needed for the bare necessities of life. He once declared, "If I die leaving, after my debts are paid, more than ten pounds, you may call me a thief." Upon being asked by the assessor to state his list of taxables, he replied: "I have two silver spoons at London and two at Bristol."

What a remarkable man! What a noble soldier of the cross! For fifty-two years he was the "soul that over England flamed." He was the greatest preacher England ever produced; he was an ecclesiastical genius. Yet in his busy life, John Wesley never forgot about the thirsty, the hungry, the stranger, the naked and the imprisoned. Wesley needs no eulogy from human tongue or pen. Only this we know that when the last roll is called and John Wesley stands before his Master, he will hear these words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

CHAPTER XVI

"SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN"

ODAY great stress is being placed upon the religious training of children. The construction of religious education buildings in connection with our churches is only one example of the interest which is now being shown in this field. This increased activity in the religious education of children has come because experience has taught us that no church can long survive or prosper that does not provide for its young people. Some people stupidly believe that this emphasis upon the religious training of children marks the beginning of something new. There are some religious education leaders who actually feel that they have originated the idea of religious nurture of children. But in this respect as in so many others these men are simply catching up with that great religious leader, John Wesley. A century and a half ago he was championing what the churches are now just beginning to do for their children.

Wesley favored the religious training of the young for many reasons. He knew that the church of the subsequent generation would be dependent upon the children of the present generation. Again and again he declared that unless the rising generation was educated in religion, his revival would last only during his lifetime. He also believed that a genuine religious life was possible in childhood. He understood then what we are learning now, that the time to lay the foundations of religion is when a person is young. He knew that the religious nature of a child should be cultivated as early

as possible. He therefore, favored religious education for children.

Wesley was a man of action. No sooner had he conceived the idea of moulding the religious life of the child than he proceeded to lay plans to make his views a reality. At the first Methodist conference in 1744 Wesley discussed with his preachers plans for the religious oversight of the children. One question of the minutes reads, "Might not the children in every place be formed into a little society?" The answer is, "Let the preachers try, by meeting them together, and by giving them suitable exhortations." Wesley later issued definite rules to his preachers upon this subject. Briefly stated these instructions read as follows: 1. Where there are ten children in a society, meet them at least an hour each week. 2. Talk with the children every time you see them at home. 3. Do not do this in a dull, formal manner, but in earnest, with all your might. 4. Pray in earnest with the children and for the children. 5. Diligently instruct and exhort all parents in their home in regard to their children. 6. Deliver sermons on the education of the children.

Wesley, himself, prepared special sermons for the children. In order that they might understand him, Wesley would often preach without using a single word of more than two syllables. On Sunday, July 17, 1785, Wesley spoke in London both morning and evening about the education of children. He ended by informing the parents that he would speak to the children at five o'clock the next morning. Imagine, if you can, a modern child attending a religious service at five A. M. Yet on Monday, Wesley wrote in his journal, "At five not only the morning chapel was well filled, but many stood in the large chapel." In order to encourage children to sing,

Wesley published exclusively for them a hymn book entitled, "Hymns for Children."

Wesley also preached and wrote on the subject of the proper training of young people. In 1745 he published a pamphlet, called "Instructions for Children," intended for parents and teachers. Wesley had two great sermons, namely, "On Family Religion" and "On the Education of Children," which he delivered in many parts of England. In training children, Wesley gave the parents four points of advice: 1. Instruct them early. 2. Speak to them plainly. 3. Teach them not only early and plainly, but frequently too. 4. Finally, if teaching is to bear fruit, teach patiently." Wesley talked and published so much upon the subject of the education and religious training of children that some parents criticised him for giving advice upon a subject of which he had no practical experience. Concerning this Wesley wrote in his journal: "Some answered by that poor, lame, miserable shift, 'Oh, he has no children of his own'; but many of a nobler spirit owned the truth."

Wesley did not have to feign an interest in children. He really loved them. It is said that he always had a smile and a kind word for a child. Often he would order his carriage a half hour before he needed it, and filling it with children, he would enjoy a ride with them before beginning the regular work of the day. The children in turn loved Wesley. At Oldham, Wesley wrote, "The children clung around me. After singing, a whole troop closed me in and would not be content till I had shook each of them by the hand." At Bolton in 1785 about five hundred children surrounded him after he had spoken to them. "Such an army got about me when I came out of the chapel," declares Wesley, "that I could not disengage myself from them."

No Methodist claims that John Wesley was the founder of the modern Sunday school. This honor belongs to Robert Raikes, who in 1781 began in the town of Gloucester the religious training of children on Sunday. It can, however, honestly be asserted that long before Raikes had started his work, Wesley had urged the religious training of children. In 1735, while in Georgia, Wesley had taught the children of Savannah on Sunday. As already noted he required his preachers to meet the children once a week. A Methodist lady by the name of Hannah Ball had in 1769 organized at Wycombe a school for the religious training of children on Sunday. This was twelve years before Raikes began his Sunday school. In a letter to Wesley, Miss Ball gave the following description of her work: "The children meet twice a week, every Sunday and Monday. They are a wild little company, but seem willing to be instructed. I labor among them, earnestly desiring to promote the interests of the Church of Christ."

To a Methodist lady, Miss Sophia Cooke, belongs the honor of having suggested the idea of the Sunday school to Robert Raikes. One day in Gloucester Miss Cooke and Mr. Raikes noticed a large number of ragged children in the streets. Struck by the forlorn condition, Raikes said to Miss Cooke, "What shall we do for these poor, neglected children?" She answered, "Let us teach them to read and take them to church." The suggestion was adopted. On the following Sunday Miss Cooke and Mr. Raikes gathered together these children and gave them religious instruction. Unperturbed by the laughter and ridicule of the bystanders, Miss Cooke marched at the head of the children as they went to the church.

Although Wesley did not start the Sunday school move-

ment, he was one of the first to popularize the idea. He saw in it another method of caring for the religious life of the children of England. He was lavish in his praise of Sunday schools. To Richard Rodda, who had founded a number of these schools near Chester, Wesley wrote, "It seems these will be one of the great means of reviving religion throughout the nation. I wonder Satan has not yet sent out some able champions against them." Again in praise of the Sunday schools he says, "This is one of the best institutions which has ever been seen in Europe for some centuries." He believed that the Sunday schools were the noblest specimens of charity which had come to England since the time of William the Conqueror.

The early Methodists adopted the Sunday school idea. They became the most prominent supporters of the movement. In his sermons Wesley urged his followers to start Sunday schools. On April 18, 1787, Wesley writes in his journal: "Notice having been given at Wigan of my preaching a sermon for the Sunday schools, the people flocked from all quarters in such a manner as never was seen before." So rapidly did the Methodists organize Sunday schools that when Wesley went to Newcastle in 1790 he found between six hundred and seven hundred Sunday school scholars. At Chester there were seven hundred in the Sunday schools and in Bolton Wesley talked to about eight hundred Methodist scholars. Because the early Methodists put so much energy into the Sunday school program, they were accused by their enemies of using these schools for the purpose of proselyting.

One thing worthy of note is that it was just as difficult to care for children then as it is today. Wesley from personal experience understood the difficulties involved in the religious training of children. At St. Ives, in August, 1768, he wrote,

"I met the children, a work which will exercise the talents of the most able preachers in England." On another occasion he records: "I met the children; the most difficult part of our office." Wesley had trouble in keeping his preachers interested in the children. They wanted to work only among the older people. One preacher complained to Wesley of having no gift for work with children. To this protest Wesley replied, "Gift or no gift, you are to do it, else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher. Do it as you can till you can do it as you would." No candidate for the Methodist ministry was admitted by Wesley until he had promised to "diligently and earnestly instruct the children."

John Wesley in his busy life did not forget that the Master said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." How sad it is that the Methodists did not follow Wesley's advice and example in regard to the religious training of the children. Thousands, perhaps even millions, of our children have been lost to the church because some of the Methodist leaders of the nineteenth century forgot that religion was for children as well as for older people. Modern Methodists must see to it that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. "That fighting spirit of Methodism" applies to children as well as to adults. Are we caring for the children and young people in our churches? Are they taught to love the church? Is the church the center of their social and religious life? We must not forget that the Methodism of the next generation will depend upon the religious education which is given to the children of our own day.

CHAPTER XVII

AN INTELLIGENT FIGHTING SPIRIT

AN you imagine yourself in John Wesley's position as he began his great work among the poor and ignorant people of England? How would you have felt after having spent fifteen years as a student and professor at Oxford University; after having mingled with the scholars and aristocracy of England, to have left those associations and to have begun work among the lowest classes of English society? Would you have been able to have sympathized with and to have understood the problems of those unlearned people? Would their gross ignorance have been repulsive to you, or would it have been an inspiration and challenge to you to give them a Christian education? John Wesley accepted the challenge. He attacked the ignorance as well as the vice of England.

Wesley, however, did not favor education simply for "education's sake." He had a higher motive than that. He realized that no religious movement could accomplish great results among ignorant people. He was convinced that lofty spiritual life was incompatible with backwardness. Knowledge and faith he claimed had the closest kinship. So at the very beginning of his great revival Wesley began to make provision for the education of his converts. It was his great ambition to raise the intellectual level of his followers. No member of a Methodist society was to remain ignorant. In immortal words, he declared, "*The Methodists may be poor, but there is no need they should be ignorant.*" Notice the educational methods used by the founder of Methodism.

Wesley began his campaign against ignorance in England by the establishment of schools. On May 21, 1739, twelve months after Wesley had felt his heart "strangely warmed" he laid the cornerstone for the first Methodist educational institution in the world. This school was located at Kingswood, and the first scholars were the children of the miners of that region. With the rapid growth of Methodism, Wesley was forced in 1748 to enlarge the school so as to "care for the children of Methodists and for the sons of itinerant preachers." Kingswood School, as it was called, was the mother "college" of Methodism.

Wesley united religion with education at Kingswood. Bravely he declared, "I will kill or cure; I will have one or the other; a Christian school or none at all." In an advertisement of the school Wesley wrote, "It is proposed in the usual hours of the day to teach chiefly the poorer children to read, write, and cast accounts; but more especially (by God's assistance) to know God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." On one occasion, Wesley said, "It is our particular desire that all who are educated here may be brought up in the fear of God." Religion and erudition were united in the mother school of Methodism.

Kingswood was the main school of early Methodism, but in addition to it Wesley started elementary schools in connection with his churches. He saw two defects in the educational system of England: the lack of education for the poor and the irreligious character of the existing schools. To remedy these evils, Wesley opened a school in 1744 at the Foundry, the first Methodist church in London. Within seven years two hundred and seventy-five boys had "graduated" from this school "most of whom," according to Mr. Todd, the principal, "were fit for any trade." The Methodist church at Bristol

was used as a school house as well as a place of worship. The chapel at Newcastle had a school connected with it.

"A reading people will always be a growing people," declared Wesley. So as a second means of education, he urged his followers to read. Reading, he claimed was necessary for proper religious development. "It cannot be," he wrote, "that the people should grow in grace unless they give themselves to reading." Wesley began therefore to spread information by the printed page. At the Foundry he opened a book room for the sale of books. He required his preachers to distribute good literature among the people. To the very poor people Wesley either loaned or gave books.

Wesley soon found that even if the lower classes of society desired to read, they did not have the proper kind of literature. Many of the eighteenth century books were very expensive. Much of the writing was too scholarly and technical for the common people. Most books were too large for the laborer who had only a few hours of leisure each day. So Wesley decided to remedy the situation by writing, publishing and popularizing books. From his own pen he began to furnish the poor people with cheaper, shorter and simpler books. By means of the press he became the great teacher of the masses.

John Wesley was a voluminous writer. He gave to the press from his own pen three hundred and seventy-one publications. He did not limit his writing to religious topics. With the exception perhaps of mathematics, Wesley wrote and published on almost every important subject. His scope of writing extended over such a large field of human knowledge that one historian has divided his works into the following classes: poetical, philological, historical, philosophical and theological. His most stupendous piece of work was his "Christian Li-

brary," complete in fifty volumes. This consisted of extracts from the writings of great ecclesiastical leaders from the apostolic days to the eighteenth century. It was an effort to acquaint the masses with the noblest men of Christianity.

Wesley's books had a tremendous circulation. Wesley was the pioneer publisher of cheap literature. The clearness and simplicity of his books assured a large sale. Two-thirds of his publications sold for less than twenty-five cents while a quarter of them sold for a penny apiece. So many of his books were bought that Wesley derived a large income from the proceeds of the sales. He was the first man in England to put good literature upon a large scale into the hands of the poor people.

Wesley's next method of education was by the use of tracts. He was the first great religious leader to realize the value of leaflets for religious and educational purposes. As early as 1745 he was "giving away some thousands of little tracts among the poor people." He was also a pioneer in this field. In 1772 he organized the first tract society in the world. By this means he reached and gave information to people who were unable to read his books.

In addition to the publication of books and pamphlets, Wesley began in January, 1778, to publish the first Methodist magazine. It was named "The Arminian Magazine." The purpose of it, according to Wesley, was to publish the best articles "on the universal love of God, and his willingness to save all from all sin." Under different names this magazine has continued to the present time and is the oldest religious periodical in England if not in the world.

It is hard to realize that Wesley could write and edit nearly four hundred books. Do you realize the amount of time and work that was involved in the writing and publication

of Wesley's books, tracts, and magazines? Also do not forget that all this literary work was done while he was preaching on an average of fifteen sermons a week and while he was traveling on horseback or in a carriage about five thousand miles a year. How could he do it? The secret is found partly in his wise use of time. Notice a few examples of how Wesley redeemed the time. On one occasion he was caught in a rain and was forced to stop in order to dry his clothing. Did Wesley lose those hours? No, for as he said, "I took the opportunity of writing 'A Word to a Freeholder.'" At another time when he had to wait for the tide to rise, he "sat down in a little cottage for three or four hours and translated 'Aldrich's Logic.'"

Because of his belief in education Wesley desired a trained Methodist ministry. This is shown by the minutes of the early Methodist conferences. One of the questions asked at the first Methodist conference in 1744 was, "Can we have a seminary for laborers?" The answer was, "If God spares us till another conference." At the next conference, in 1745, a question asked was, "Can we have a seminary for laborers yet?" The reply was, "Not till God gives us a proper tutor." At almost every conference Wesley spoke about the organization of a theological school. This school never materialized during Wesley's lifetime but he used the next best method. He demanded that all his preachers should read and study. In fact he refused to retain a preacher who would not continue his studies. To those who said they had no taste for reading, Wesley would give the curt reply, "Contract a taste for it or return to your trade." When one of his lay preachers refused to read any book except the Bible, Wesley said, "If you need no book but the Bible, you have got above St. Paul—you need preach no more."

Wesley believed in an intelligent fighting spirit. At a time when learning was not popular, he championed the cause of Christian education. As author, editor and publisher, he contributed more than any man of his generation to the literary as well as the religious progress of his country. Wesley gave the first impulse to popular education in England. Our church can be proud of the fact that the "Methodists were the first to provide schools on an extensive scale for the education of the poor."

Do modern Methodists believe in an intelligent fighting spirit? Are we true followers of John Wesley? If we really are, we will do the following things: first, support our denominational schools; second, provide education at a low cost for poor people; third, make our schools Christian by the union of education and religion; fourth, keep mentally alert by the reading of good books; fifth, support and read Methodist periodicals and magazines; sixth, make our churches educational centers; seventh, demand an educated ministry. The issue is before us. Will the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, be able to carry on the intelligent fighting spirit started by that great hero of Methodism, John Wesley?

CHAPTER XVIII

APPLYING IT TO WEALTH

ETHODISM began among the lower classes of English society. Nearly all of Wesley's early converts were from the poor people—miners, factory workers, and farm laborers. These early Methodists, if able to contribute money for church work, gave pennies, not pounds. Thus, in the beginning of his work, Wesley's problems were those which arose and centered around the poor people of England.

But the early Methodists did not remain poor. In fact many of them became prosperous while some actually accumulated wealth. This success they owed to Wesley, since the very qualities of sobriety and frugality which he taught them led to material abundance. The Methodists did not spend their money in drinking and gambling. By their newly acquired habit of quiet, honest living, they became useful workers who saved their money. In the space of a quarter of a century many Methodists became as Wesley stated, "twenty, thirty, yea a hundred times richer than they were when they first entered the society."

This accumulation of money by the Methodists, however, had a bad effect upon their religious zeal. Wesley soon noticed that with the increase in wealth there came a corresponding decrease in grace. They became proud—lovers of material rather than spiritual things. They began to shift their confidence and trust from God to themselves. In despair, Wesley declared, "I have not known threescore rich

persons, perhaps not half the number, who, as far as I can judge, were not less holy than they would have been, had they been poor." "How many rich persons are there among the Methodists," asked Wesley, "who actually do deny themselves and take up their cross daily? Who of you that are now rich deny yourselves just as you did when you were poor?" From observation Wesley came to the conclusion that it was a hard task for a man to amass great wealth and at the same time retain his religious zeal. Even to Ebenezer Blackwell, Wesley's most wealthy and loyal layman, he wrote: "What an amazing thing it will be if you endure to the end."

Wesley regarded the growing wealth of Methodism as one of its great dangers. He saw clearly the evils of the situation. Wesley, however, was not a leader who flinched in the face of serious problems. He faced this issue in his usual sane manner. He preached sermon after sermon on the subject of the relation of wealth and religion. Readers of Wesley's Journal will find this topic mentioned many times. His solution for the problem of keeping rich people religious was, "*Gain all you can, save all you can, but give all you can.*"

Wesley was not opposed in principle to the accumulation of wealth. He said, "Gain all you can by honest industry. Use all possible diligence in your calling." Wesley admitted that such was his policy. "Permit me to speak freely of myself," said Wesley, "as I would of another man. I gain all I can (namely by writing) without hurting either my soul or body." Wesley believed that it was permissible for a man to gain all he could if it were not done at the expense of the body, soul, or mind of the man or of his neighbor.

"Save all you can" was Wesley's second rule. "Having gained all you can by honest wisdom and unwearied diligence, the second rule of Christian living," declared Wesley, "is save

all you can." He warned the Methodists against spending any part of their money to gratify the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eye, or the desires of pride. Wesley set the example of thrift. "I save all I can," he once said, "not willingly wasting anything, not a sheet of paper, nor a cup of water."

It is apparent that if a man gains all he can and saves all he can that he will have much wealth, and with it will come the temptation to secure more riches. Therefore, Wesley's next rule reads, "Give all you can." He expressed it in this manner: "Having gained all you can, and saved all you can, give all you can; else your money will eat your flesh as fire and will sink you to the nethermost hell." As Wesley further explained, "If a man observed the first two rules and not the third, he will be twofold more the child of hell than he was before." Giving became the safety valve for gaining and saving. Wesley would have been wealthy if he had kept all the money that came from the sale of his books. He preferred instead to give it to charity. By following that policy, Wesley declared, "I am effectually secured from laying up treasure upon earth."

It was difficult for Wesley to convince the early Methodists of the wisdom of gaining all, saving all, and giving all. Many of them followed the first rule, a lesser number the first and the second, but with the third point, "Give all you can," nearly all hesitated. When Wesley chided his followers for spending their money upon luxuries, a customary reply was, "But I can afford it." This always angered Wesley. In disgust he would answer, "Oh, lay aside forever that idle, nonsensical word. No Christian can afford to waste any part of the substance which God has entrusted him with." When some Methodists justified themselves by giving a tenth of their

income, Wesley declared, "Render unto God, not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God's, be it more or less."

Wesley entreated the rich Methodists to give in their wills some of their money to good causes. Of this Wesley said, "Surely if I did little good with my money while I lived, I would at least do good with it when I could live no longer." He especially appealed to people who had no heirs. Of them he inquired, "And if you have not children, upon what scriptural principle can you leave behind you more than will bury you?" To Wesley's appeals that people bequeath money to religious institutions, there came the familiar cry, "I must provide for my children." To this Wesley would answer, "Certainly. But how? By making them rich? Then you will probably make them heathens, as some of you have done already. Leave them enough to live on, not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry." When asked to state how he would provide for children if he had any, he replied, "I ought then to give each what would keep him above want, and to bestow all the rest in such manner as I judged would be meet for the glory of God."

Wesley's concern about the wise use of money by the Methodists did not aid his popularity. Rich Methodists loved to hear Wesley preach upon any other subject but money. He was once told by a layman that he did not know the value of money. To this Wesley wrote, "I have heard today that I do not know the value of money. What! Don't I know that twelve pence make a shilling, and twenty-one shillings a guinea? Don't I know that if given to God, it's worth heaven, through Christ? And don't I know that if hoarded and kept, it's worth damnation to the man who hoards it?"

John Wesley was a wise leader. He did not attack the acquisition, by honest methods, of wealth. Although he saw

the harm that could come to Methodism by the worship of money, he did not blindly condemn wealth, but instead he worked out the formula of gaining all possible, saving all possible, but giving all possible. He solved a difficult problem in a manner which did not drive the rich men from the ranks of Methodism, but instead encouraged these men to apply Christian principles in the use of their money. The dedication of Methodist wealth to the cause of righteousness was one of Wesley's great contributions. Thus it came about that within Methodism there have been both the rich and the poor. It was this characteristic that ex-President Roosevelt admired in the Methodist church. Speaking in 1903, he praised the Methodist church because it had "throughout its career been a church for the poor as well as for the rich."

The problems which Wesley faced regarding rich Methodists are still before us. Years ago, American Methodists were poor people. In fact because the early American Methodists were often only the poor whites and the negroes, the Methodist church was called the "nigger church." Today many of the descendants of those poor Methodists are wealthy and cultured. In too many cases, unfortunately, these wealthy Methodists feel that they no longer need the help of God. Some are wasting the money given to them by good, pious parents, while some give only a pittance to the church. Methodism of the twentieth century has to face the identical problem which Wesley faced.

Shall Methodism lose its fighting spirit because it has become prosperous? Will our riches, culture, and social position cause us to lose our religion? These questions cannot be answered by a denunciation of wealth. Rather, let us endeavor to Christianize the wealth of Methodism. There is a place in Methodism for all classes of society.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CONQUEROR OF JOHN CALVIN

WO hundred years ago "Calvinism," or the belief more commonly known as "predestination" was the prevalent theology. It was called Calvinism because John Calvin had given the best organized exposition of that theory. According to Calvinism, God, before the creation of the world, predestined that certain people should be saved and that other people should be eternally damned. In the words of John Calvin: "All men are not created for the same end: but some are foreordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation." The people who were predestined to salvation were called the "elect," while the others were called the "reprobate." According to this theory, it was impossible for the individual himself to save or lose his own soul. If he were predestined to be saved, he would be saved, even though he should not desire salvation; and if he were predestined to be damned, nothing on his part (good works, love of God, or an upright life), would have any influence. Again, if he were one of the "elect," he would never go back into sin. He might desire to sin, but because God had predestined him to salvation, he would persevere in the right. God decided which men were to be saved. Man had no part in his own salvation or damnation.

You will at once ask, how could people believe in such an unfair theology? How could they reconcile it with the goodness and mercy of God, with the life and teachings of Jesus? Yet when John Wesley was born this theory was

held by the Presbyterians, by the Puritans, by the French Protestants, by the majority of the Baptist churches, and, in a modified form, by the Church of England. There had been, of course, opposition to Calvinism, but it was left to John Wesley, the hero of Methodism, to give the death blow to this horrible scheme of salvation.

As a young man, Wesley had questioned the doctrine of predestination. While at Oxford University he had become so excited about this theory that he wrote to his mother for advice concerning it. Susanna Wesley was too intelligent to believe in Calvinism. In her reply she wrote: "The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by the rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought to be abhorred, because it directly charges the most high God with being the author of sin." Wesley accepted his mother's view. He decided that the theory of predestination was incorrect. He could not conceive how any sensible man could believe in Calvinism. To a predestinarian friend he wrote: "Now, can you, upon reflection, believe this?" Wesley determined while at Oxford University that if ever in life he had the opportunity he would destroy the theory of predestination.

This opportunity came to John Wesley. As the great itinerant, he had the chance to give to the people a new theology. From the very beginning of his ministry he denounced predestination. In 1739, one year after he had felt his heart strangely warmed, Wesley preached at Bristol his great sermon on "Free Grace," in which he showed why predestination was wrong. He based his objections upon the following points:

First, it rendered preaching vain. There was no point in preaching to the "elect" since they would be saved anyway. It was equally as useless to preach to the non-elect, be-

cause with preaching or without, they would be infallibly damned.

Second, it tended to destroy the struggle for holiness, because if everything had been settled by God before the creation of the world, people had no incentive to strive to be good.

Third, it abolished zeal for good works. If God arbitrarily directs human activity, why should people endeavor to do good things.

Fourth, it overthrew the whole Christian revelation, by making the work of Christ unnecessary.

Fifth, it was full of blasphemy. It represented God as a hypocrite, pretending a love for mankind which he did not have.

Sixth, it represented God as a cruel tyrant, a God that arbitrarily condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire.

Wesley refused to compromise in regard to the doctrine of predestination. He was its unfaltering enemy. Regarding predestination, Wesley exclaimed: "And here I set my foot. I join with every assertor of it." When the Presbyterians offered Scripture as a proof of predestination, Wesley replied: "Let it mean what it will, it cannot mean that the Judge of all the world is unjust. No Scripture can mean that God is not love or his mercy is not over all his works."

In place of predestination, Wesley substituted the great doctrine of universal redemption. "You say," declared Wesley to the Calvinists, "Christ died only for the elect; and these must and shall be saved. I say, Christ died for every man and he willeth all men to be saved." Because Christ had died for all men, Wesley maintained that every person, though he be poor or rich, black or white, ignorant or educated, came within the sweep of God's love, and that against no one was the gateway of eternal life arbitrarily closed. He

asked the Calvinists to reconcile predestination with the following Scripture: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

Not only did Wesley revive in Protestantism the doctrine of the universality of the atonement, but he also restated the New Testament teaching of the love and Fatherhood of God. The Calvinists had taught that God was to be feared; that he was an autocratic God, who according to his whims, predestined some to salvation and damned others. Wesley shifted the emphasis from absolute sovereignty to the fatherly love of God. He made the love of God, not his will, the explanation of his dealing with mankind. John Calvin had stressed the power of God; John Wesley stressed his love and mercy. The early Methodists thought of God as a loving Father, a father who cares for all his wayward children.

John Wesley also stressed the freedom of the human will. Calvinism had taken from mankind the power to choose between good and evil, but Wesley maintained that every man is responsible for his own salvation or damnation. Against divine authorship of human conduct, Methodism put the free and responsible agency of man. "God wants his people to be saved," declared Wesley, "not as trees and stones, but as men, as reasonable creatures, endued with understanding to discern what is good, and liberty to accept or refuse it." The Methodist gospel was a gospel of individual responsibility. "So then every one must give an account of himself to God," was a popular text used by the early Methodist preachers. Metho-

dism preached that every man was the master of his own spiritual fate.

Is it any wonder then that Methodism made progress with this wonderful message to proclaim? With the doctrine of universal redemption, the early Methodists were armed with overwhelming power. To men and women, who heretofore had felt themselves cut off from God, the Methodist preachers held wide open the door of eternal life. There was hope for every penitent sinner. It was a new message for the people of England. In place of cold Calvinism, they heard the cheerful message of universal atonement. The offer of free salvation, because of its contrast with current Calvinism, became the most striking and inspiring element of Methodism.

Because Wesley dared to offer free salvation, he was bitterly attacked. It is interesting to notice what the Calvinists said about him. One Calvinist declared that he "abhorred John Wesley as much as he did the pope and ten times more than he did the devil." Even Wesley's college mate, George Whitefield, informed Wesley that he had, in his opposition to predestination, aligned himself with infidels of all kind. Augustus Toplady, the Calvinist, who wrote that great hymn, "Rock of Ages," seems to have lost his Christian spirit in his denunciation of Wesley. He characterized Wesley as "a designing wolf," "a dealer in stolen wares," "unprincipled as a rock, and as silly as a jackdaw," "a gray-headed enemy of all righteousness," "a venal profligate," "the most rancorous hater of the Gospel system that ever appeared in this land," and "a low and puny tadpole in divinity."

John Wesley, two hundred years ago, was denounced but his message has been victorious. Today it is hard to find a person who really believes in Calvinism. Predestination may occasionally be mentioned in Presbyterian pulpits, but when

it is, it is so modified that it is no longer orthodox Calvinism. In its place there is today preached in all Protestant churches those great Methodist doctrines of universal atonement, the love and Fatherhood of God, and the dignity of the human will. Protestants today are so accustomed to these doctrines that they forget that at one time Protestantism was controlled by narrow Calvinism. The credit for this change belongs to Methodism. The continual preaching to thousands by John Wesley and his successors of the doctrine of universal atonement destroyed the power of Calvinism. John Wesley was truly the conqueror of John Calvin.

Methodism throughout its history has never placed restrictions upon the invitation which God gives to mankind. The Methodist preachers in all parts of the world have always offered free salvation to all people. According to Methodism, no person has ever been so poor or so degraded that he cannot be touched by the love of God. In immortal words, Charles Wesley, the hymn-writer of Methodism, has stated the Methodist invitation:

"Come sinners to the gospel feast;
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden all mankind.

Sent by my word, on you I call;
The invitation is to all;
Come all the world! Come, sinner thou!
All things in Christ are ready now."

CHAPTER XX

A SENSIBLE THEOLOGY

Y DOCTRINES are simply the common fundamental principles of Christianity. They are the plain old theology of the Church of England." Thus spake John Wesley, founder of Methodism. What a strange statement for a leader of a great religious denomination. In view of the fact that the majority of religious movements prior to Methodism had been started because of division of opinion as to theology, Wesley's statement is even more startling. Presbyterianism began because John Calvin espoused the doctrine of predestination; the Baptists started because a group of people championed certain views regarding the sacrament of baptism; while Unitarianism originated because of an opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity. But with Methodism it was different. John Wesley has the unique honor of having started a great denomination without insisting upon a new theology, and without criticising the traditional doctrines of the Christian church.

John Wesley never stressed theology, nor was Methodism founded upon a system of creeds and dogmas. "The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort," declared Wesley repeatedly. "We do not lay the main stress of our religion," said Wesley, "on opinions, right or wrong; neither do we begin, nor willingly join in, any dispute concerning them." Wesley did not believe that the verbal adherence to a creed or that an intelligent understanding of all Christian doctrine was absolutely necessary for

salvation. "God will not cast him into everlasting fire," insisted Wesley in reference to an uneducated Christian, "because his views are not clear or his conceptions are confused."

Wesley stressed something greater and more noble than theology—namely, the living of a good life. That was his criterion of a religious man. In words held sacred by all Methodists, Wesley exclaimed, "*I believe the merciful God regards the lives of men more than their ideas. I believe he respects the goodness of the heart rather than the clearness of the head.*" Again he continued: "The weight of religion rests on holiness of heart and life." Early Methodism, therefore, was not known because of its championship of certain theological opinions. Methodism was not a revolt against the prevalent theology of eighteenth century England. It was rather a call to men to rededicate their lives to holy living. "To spread scriptural holiness over these lands," Wesley constantly insisted was the reason God had raised up the Methodists. Methodists were to be known by their lives, not by their ideas. "By the fruits of living faith," declared Wesley, "do we labor to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world."

Early Methodism differed from the other churches of eighteenth century England in that it did not have doctrinal tests for membership. When a man presented himself for membership in a Methodist society, Wesley did not ask him if he could explain the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, nor if he clearly understood the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds. Instead Wesley asked the applicant only two simple questions: first, "Is thy heart right?"; second, "Dost thou love and serve God?" If the person answered in the affirmative, then said Wesley, "It

is enough. I give him the right hand of fellowship." What a sensible theology it was to place the attitude of the heart and the love of God before a detailed knowledge of theology. "Religion . . . does not lie in this or that set of notions," said Wesley. "No," he continued, "it properly and directly consists in the knowledge and love of God."

Instead of stressing theology, Methodism emphasized definite Christian experience. This is best illustrated by recalling the life of John Wesley. For the first thirty-five years of his life, Wesley tried to save his soul by his own works and by minutely following the rules and theology of the Church of England. How miserable he was living under that program. How unhappy, how restless, how he longed for the proper Christian spirit for his neighbors. Finally Wesley decided to put his trust in Jesus Christ. Wesley no longer trusted for salvation in his own works and in his knowledge of theology. He came to his Saviour as a little child. Then one night when he was attending a religious service in Aldersgate Street, London, Wesley tells us: "At a quarter of nine I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Wesley's experience that night in Aldersgate Street marks the birthday of historic Methodism. On that night Wesley came into vital contact with God; he formed a life companionship with Jesus; to him had come a vital Christian experience. Dependence upon Jesus Christ had brought to Wesley in that Christian experience all that he had longed for during his many years of loyalty to the forms and theology of the Church of England. From that night Wesley went through England pleading with men not to memorize creeds,

but to have a vital Christian experience. Instead of a cold theology, Methodism preached the doctrine of a "warmed heart."

Justification by faith and the feeling of divine pardon were not new theological views; they were not invented by Wesley. These doctrines had been taught by men like the Apostle Paul and Martin Luther. The other views advocated by Wesley had been in the historic creeds for many centuries. Yet the people of eighteenth century England felt, when Wesley spoke of justification by faith, assurance and perfection, that they were listening to a new message. How can this fact be explained? Why, because Wesley gave new life to those doctrines of the Apostolic age and the Reformation period. Wesley had a freshness of tone which came from his warmed heart. Although Wesley preached the old doctrines, yet they seemed new, because they radiated with a vitality which came from Wesley's own Christian experience.

Wesley caused the Christian doctrines to have a vital force in the lives of individuals. "The problem of problems," he declared, "is how to get the principles of Christ put into practice." That was Wesley's great aim. He tried to interpret the gospel so that it would touch the hearts and lives of people. His presentation of the historic doctrines of the church can best be illustrated by an incident in his own life. Once Wesley returned to his old church at Epworth. It was the church in which Wesley had been baptized and confirmed, and in the church-yard was the grave of his father. Naturally he desired to preach in the church which held for him so many sacred memories. But the rector, who perhaps knew the Thirty-Nine Articles, but who could not stir a soul by the presentation of the same, refused Wesley this privilege. Wesley, therefore, went into the church-yard and standing upon his

father's tombstone, preached to the people in a tone of freshness and sincerity which they had never before heard. Taking the old doctrines of the Anglican Church as his theological basis, Wesley interpreted them in such a manner that the hearts and lives of the people of Epworth were mightily touched. Epworth had a great revival. Just as Wesley stood upon the tombstone of his father, he also stood upon the Anglican faith of his father, but he was able to explain that faith in such a way as to touch the lives of his hearers. That was symbolic of Methodism. Methodism stands upon the historic doctrines of Protestantism, but in the mouths of Methodist preachers these doctrines have taken on new life. "Thus," declares a historian, "Methodism, standing upon the buried past, speaks her message into the living hearts of men."

John Wesley refused to become excited over the nonessentials of Christianity. He did not waste his time arguing over petty theological issues. This attitude can well be seen by a certain series of sermons which Wesley wrote. Upon being asked by a follower for a statement of what he considered necessary for a person to know to be an intelligent Christian, Wesley wrote a series of forty-four sermons, containing what he considered to be the Christian message. Of the forty-four sermons, twenty-four or more than half dealt with the subject of the practical concerns of Christians living. The texts for most of these twenty-four sermons were taken from Christ's Sermon on the Mount. The remaining twenty sermons dealt with doctrinal and theological matters. There was not, however, a single sermon on the second coming of Christ, not one on the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and not one on the much discussed subject of the virgin birth. That does not necessarily imply that Wesley disbelieved in those doctrines. He simply did not consider such things necessary for

the instructing of people in the living of a good Christian life. Wesley never upset a church over such doctrinal issues. He stressed the essentials of the Christian message and the people heard him glady. Methodism was not a philosophy or a theology; it was a Christian experience causing men to exemplify the Christian ideals in contact with their neighbors.

Wesley reversed the ecclesiastical method of his day. Other denominations had tried to put creeds first and religion second, but Wesley changed this policy. He placed religion first and creeds second. Wesley made Christians out of men first, and then they could be theologians if they cared to be. Wesley was proud of this characteristic of Methodism. "Now I do not know any other religious society," remarked Wesley, "either ancient or modern wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the apostles. Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us."

Methodism has been richly rewarded for its liberal theology. Never has Methodism been split over doctrinal issues. There are many branches of American Methodism, but not one branch arose because of doctrinal disputes. Today, when other denominations are involved in the modernist-fundamentalist controversy, Methodism has kept out of it. Never has Methodism endeavored to stifle the pulpit, the classroom and the press. And yet we have been orthodox. No religious group has been more orthodox than the Methodists. There have been very few heresy trials in Methodism. As Dr. Riggs writes: "Methodism, whether in England or in the universal domains of England or America, has never given birth to heresy."

Methodism should thank God that John Wesley, in an age of creeds and dogmas, gave to us a sensible theology. During the past century and half our liberalism, based upon a vital

Christian experience, has been our glory. Unitarianism and the many other "isms" with their proclamations of theological freedom have secured very few members from the ranks of Methodism. Because of our sensible theology it has been possible for the "modernists," the "fundamentalists," and the "middle of ground theologians" to feel at home in the Methodist church. All grades of theology are represented in our annual conferences, yet we are able to avoid theological controversies.

Modern Methodism must carry on the liberal views of John Wesley. How sad it would be if certain Methodist leaders of the twentieth century should be able to reverse the historical position of Methodism; should be able to bind Methodism by hard and fast creeds. There would then be no real fighting spirit in Methodism; our energy would be expended over theological disputes. John Wesley was too busy spreading the gospel over England to interest himself in theological quarrels. A similar ceaseless activity on the part of all Methodist preachers is the best antidote for heresy hunting. Modern Methodists must be loyal to those immortal words of John Wesley: "I believe the merciful God regards the lives of men more than their ideas."

CHAPTER XXI

"AND HE HATH PUT A NEW SONG IN MY MOUTH"—Psa. 40:3

T IS DIFFICULT for Protestants of today to realize that two hundred years ago our forefathers did not have the beautiful hymns which we now possess. The Roman Catholic church had never favored congregational singing. Martin Luther had written some beautiful hymns, but in the eighteenth century they were used only in German churches. Some of the English Protestant churches used the Psalms as hymns, though the singing of Psalms proved to be dull and lifeless. Before Methodism arose in England, men like Watts and Doddridge had written some hymns, but in general the use of hymns in church services was very limited.

Methodism must be given the credit for popularizing the use of hymns in Protestant churches. The Methodism that produced the greatest ecclesiastical statesman of all time, John Wesley, also furnished to the world the "poet of Christendom," Charles Wesley.

Charles Wesley, the brother of John Wesley, was born at Epworth on December 18, 1708. He was given an excellent home training by his mother, Susanna Wesley. He was graduated from Oxford University, was ordained as a minister in the Anglican church, and for a short time was a missionary to Georgia. Like his brother John, he had had a vital Christian experience. When John Wesley began the great Methodist movement, Charles aided him as a Methodist

itinerant, though he never preached as did his brother. His constitution was too feeble to continue as a traveling preacher, and as he had a large family to support, he soon ceased his itinerant work and located permanently in London.

Charles Wesley's services, however, were not lost to Methodism. While his brother was preaching to the masses of England, Charles served by writing the great hymns of Methodism. His name has been immortalized in Methodism and in all Protestantism because of his devotional poetry. Between 1738 and 1788 he wrote 6,500 hymns, an average of one for every three days for fifty years. It now takes thirteen volumes of five hundred pages each to contain his hymns. During his lifetime there were issued sixty-three separate publications of his hymns. No other person has ever written so many hymns.

Not only did Charles Wesley write many hymns, but he also wrote hymns of unsurpassed excellence, hymns which will last for centuries to come. Nearly one hundred and fifty years have passed since the death of Charles Wesley, yet sixteen per cent of the hymns in the Methodist Hymnal are written by that Methodist poet. He has been called the "poet of Methodism," though he could more aptly be called the "poet of Christendom," because the entire Christian world has made use of his poems. His hymns are to be found not only in Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational hymnals, but also in those used by the Unitarians, the Universalists and the Mormons. The titles of a few of Charles Wesley's hymns will show how universally they are used:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"
"O for a thousand tongues to sing,"
"Come Thou Almighty King,"
"Love divine, all loves excelling,"
"Hark the herald angels sing,"

"Christ the Lord is risen today,"
"A charge to keep I have,"
"Arise, my soul, arise,"
"Soldiers of Christ arise."

Perhaps the greatest of Charles Wesley's hymns is "Jesus, lover of my soul." It was written shortly after his conversion. Many accounts have been given as to the occasion for writing this hymn. Because of its reference to tempests and storms, it is thought that an ocean storm during Wesley's voyage to Georgia furnished the inspiration. It is one of the supreme hymns of the world. Millions of people have received comfort in the hour of trial and discouragement by the singing of these beautiful words:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high,
Hide me, O my Saviour hide,
Till the storm of life be past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last."

This hymn has gone to all parts of the earth, and has been translated into virtually every language there is. It has been described as the "finest heart hymn in the English language." Henry Ward Beecher declared: "I would rather have written that hymn of Wesley's, 'Jesus, lover of my soul, Let me to thy bosom fly,' than to have had the fame of all the kings that ever sat on earth. That hymn will go on singing until the last trumpet brings forth the angel band; and then, I think, it will mount up on some lip to the very presence of God."

Another great hymn of Charles Wesley's was "O for a

thousand tongues to sing." When Wesley was converted he was told that his blessing was an individual affair, and that he must not say anything about it. For awhile he followed that policy, but upon the first anniversary of his blessing he had become so enthused over his new found peace with God that instead of keeping it to himself he wrote:

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumph of his grace."

Since 1780 this hymn has been placed as Number 1 in nearly all the Methodist hymnals. In reference to this privileged position, Mr. Stead has said: "Given the first place in the Methodist hymn book, it may be said to strike the keynote of the whole of Methodism, that multitudinous chorus, whose voices, like the sound of many waters, encompassed the world."

It is inspiring to study in detail the history of Charles Wesley's great hymns, but space allows now for only a few generalizations. First of all, Wesley's hymns are characterized by the theme of divine love. The word "love" appears in his poems hundreds of times. He was never weary of writing about it. "Love" was descriptive of the spirit that animated Charles Wesley. In these immortal words he embodied the theme of God's love to mankind:

"Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown."

Another striking peculiarity of Wesley's poetry is its energy, strength and vitality. He always wrote with vigor

because he was always in earnest. He felt deeply and accordingly expressed himself with great force. There is nothing weak, silly, or sentimental in any of Wesley's hymns. Garret Horder says: "For spontaneity of feeling, his hymns are pre-eminent. They are songs that soar. They have the rush and fervor which bear the soul aloft."

Charles Wesley's hymns expressed the personal element. To him God was not a distant King, but was a spirit dwelling in every believer's heart. Charles Wesley's religion was a personal religion; his whole outlook on life had been moulded by a personal Christian experience. Therefore instead of describing salvation in general terms, Charles Wesley could always picture it as a concrete personal reality. Notice the subjective aspect of the following hymns:

"Arise, *my* soul arise,"

"Jesus, lover of *my* soul,"

"A charge to keep *I* have,"

"And are *we* yet alive?"

"Come thou Almighty King, help *us* thy name to praise."

Charles Wesley caused the early Methodists to sing from a personal standpoint the great themes of the Christian faith.

Charles Wesley's hymns ring with the tone of assurance. There was no doubt in Wesley's mind of God's love. He knew that he had received salvation through Jesus Christ. While others wrote about the hope of salvation, Wesley wrote as one who had already experienced that blessing. As an example compare one of Watts's hymns with one that Wesley wrote. Watts said:

"Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Nor Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore."

In contrast with that longing and wishing, Wesley bravely sets forth:

"The promised land, from Pisgah's top,
I now exult to see,
My hope is full: O gracious hope
Of immortality."

Charles Wesley's hymns are immortal because Wesley had personally experienced the things which he describes. He knew the joys of salvation, hence he could sing of them sublimely. Much sorrow had come into his life, so he was able to sing in tones understood by all in sorrow. The successive deaths of his five children enabled him to sympathize in verse with those made sorrowful by the hand of death. Wesley's writings met definite human needs. The early Methodists could find inspiration and guidance for every moment of their lives in the hymns of Charles Wesley. Isaac Taylor has declared that there is no height of feeling proper to the spiritual life that "does not find itself emphatically and pointedly and clearly conveyed in some stanzas of Charles Wesley's hymns."

Charles Wesley's hymns embodied the theology of the Methodist revival. While John Wesley put the Methodist theology into form, Charles Wesley versified the doctrines, and caused them to be sung by his generation and by all future generations. So many fundamental doctrines of religion were embodied in Charles Wesley's hymns that once John Wesley declared that the Methodists could find in his brother's hymns a summary of practical and experimental theology. There is hardly a doctrine of Methodism that is not found in Charles Wesley's hymns. In his hymns on God's universal and everlasting love Charles Wesley probably did more to destroy the doctrine of predestination than did all his brother's sermons

against it. Very few people today read John Wesley's books on theology, but every Sunday millions of people sing the theology of Methodism in Charles Wesley's hymns.

From 1738 to 1788 Charles Wesley served his Master by writing the great hymns of Methodism. He praised his Saviour to the very end of life. A few days before his death, while in extreme feebleness, he called Mrs. Wesley to his bedside and requested her to write the following lines at his dictation:

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
Jesus, my only hope thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart,
O could I catch a smile from thee,
And drop into eternity."

That was Charles Wesley's swan song. In beautiful sentiment, one historian has written of Charles Wesley: "For fifty years, Christ as the Redeemer of men had been the subject of his effective ministry, and of his loftiest songs; and he may be said to have died with a hymn to Christ upon his lips."

Charles Wesley put a new song into the life of England. The early Methodists began to sing his great hymns, and soon the characteristic note of Methodism was joyfulness. The religion of some denominations had made the people sour and morose; the Methodists, on the other hand, became happy people. Soon it was possible to locate the Methodists because of the singing and whistling that was always heard in a Methodist home. Singing of Wesley's hymns by the Methodists affected the nation. All the nation broke into song. Clarke records: "In church and chapels, by the wayside, and in the

field, in the shop and in the kitchen, and in the parlor, on foot and on horseback, men learned to sing."

Methodism would never have had its marvelous progress without its great hymnology. Fletcher truthfully has stated: "One of the greatest blessings that God has bestowed upon the Methodists, next to the Bible, is their collection of hymns." Charles Wesley's great hymns have been a part of our fighting spirit. Are we making sufficient use of them in our churches? Are we allowing the transitory popularity of some modern hymns to supplant "Jesus, lover of my soul," and "Love divine, all loves excelling?" Are we wise in encouraging paid choirs to do the majority of our singing? Are we not often permitting elaborate anthems and sometimes even pagan music to take the place of the Christian hymns of Charles Wesley? Methodism made progress because it had a new song in its soul. If Methodists allow their music and song to go out of their lives, will they keep their fighting spirit? Dr. Buckley spoke wisdom when, before the Methodist Ecumenical Conference in 1881, he said: "Mark this: Methodism dies when Methodists do not sing; or singing, do not sing their doctrines and experiences."

CHAPTER XXII

AMONG FIGHTING IRISHMEN

N ENGLAND, John Wesley had worked among people who were either nominally Protestant in faith, or whose religious background was that of Protestantism. In Ireland, however, he had a different situation to face. Ireland was a strong Roman Catholic country. Although there were some Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in the region of Ulster and a few Anglicans scattered through the island, they were negligible in comparison to the millions of Roman Catholics. In the eighteenth century five out of every six persons in Ireland were members of the Church of Rome, and it was difficult to convert them to Protestantism. Charles Wesley declared that at least ninety-nine in a hundred of the native Irish remained in the religion of their forefathers.

Not only was Ireland a Roman Catholic country but it also had the bigoted kind of Roman Catholicism. The native Irish were under the absolute sway of the Roman Catholic priests. Ireland was a priest ridden country. The ignorant Irish peasants, believing that the priests had the power to keep them out of heaven, were willing to meekly follow their leadership. For two hundred years these people had been taught to hate Protestants. Therefore a suggestion from the priests was all that was necessary to start mob violence against non-Catholics.

The Irish were controlled by an ignorant type of Roman Catholicism; the kind which is always found where Roman

Catholicism is the dominant religion and where there is no vital Protestantism to compete with it. John Wesley described the religion of the Irish in the following manner: "And how much do they know of this? A little more than the Hottentots, and not much. They know the names of God, and Christ, and the Virgin Mary. They know a little of St. Patrick, the pope, and the priest; how to tell their beads, to say Ave Maria and Pater Noster; to do what penance they are bid, to hear mass, confess and pay so much for the pardon of their sins. But as to the nature of religion, the life of God in the soul, they know no more (I will not say, than the priest, but) than the beasts of the field."

It would seem that Wesley would not have dared to have entered Ireland, controlled as it was by bigoted and unscrupulous Roman Catholics. Other Protestant denominations, up to that time, had made no progress there. Methodism of the eighteenth century, however, did not flinch before great tasks and opportunities. No country was too hostile for John Wesley. He was not afraid of the power of Roman Catholicism. So on August 9, 1747, John Wesley set foot for the first time on Irish soil. At Dublin he found that a layman, by the name of Thomas Williams, had already organized a Methodist society, and had hired an old Lutheran chapel for a preaching place. Wesley began to preach in that church, but soon the crowds were so large that he had to use the chapel yard. On his first visit to Ireland, Wesley remained only two weeks. He was so encouraged, however, by the prospects for Methodism in Ireland that he wrote: "If my brother and I could have been here a few months, I question if there might not have been a larger society in Dublin than in even London itself."

Two weeks after John Wesley left Ireland, Charles Wes-

ley arrived in Dublin to take up the work started by his brother. Only a fortnight had elapsed, yet in that time the Roman Catholic priests had stirred up their followers against the Methodists. A Roman Catholic mob in Dublin had broken into the little Methodist chapel; had wrecked the interior, and had burned the pews and the pulpit. Notices had been posted threatening death to anyone who dared to assemble in the Methodist chapel. When Charles Wesley came to Dublin he was stoned through the streets. Bigoted and ignorant Irish Roman Catholics, armed with shillalahs, went through Dublin searching for men and women who joined the Methodists or even listened to their preachers.

The Irish Roman Catholics might have scared some people by these rough tactics, but they were unable to intimidate John Wesley. The treatment which the Irish Methodists received only caused John Wesley to be more determined to give to the ignorant priest ridden people of Ireland a message of divine love in place of their medieval superstitions. Between 1747 and the time of his death, Wesley made forty-two visits to Ireland. In all he spent a half dozen years of his life in the "emerald isle." He fought Roman Catholicism in its own stronghold.

Early Methodism succeeded in Ireland but at a great price. The organized forces of Roman Catholicism waged a bitter fight against the Methodists. Priests from their altars denounced the Methodists and incited the Roman Catholics to do bodily injury to them. It must have been amusing to have seen the Irish priests make their appearance on the edge of a crowd listening to a Methodist helper "and drive off his own people with gestures and curses, like a watch dog harrying a flock of sheep that had wandered into forbidden pastures." "All the Catholic priests," Charles Wesley wrote, "take

wretched pains to hinder the people from hearing us." According to the priests, Wesley continued, "all manner of wickedness is acted in our society, except the eating of little children."

The Methodists received physical injuries from the hands of the Irish Roman Catholics. At Athlone, Jonathan Healy, a Methodist lay preacher, was attacked and knocked from his horse by a mob that had been collected by a village priest. John Trembath, another lay preacher, declared that in Dublin, "when we went out we carried our lives in our hands." Justice was denied to the Methodists in the courts of Ireland. Even in cases of the most brutal treatment of Methodists, the Roman Catholic assailants were acquitted. The best example of Roman Catholic bigotry was shown in the city of Cork, where during the months of May and June, 1749, ignorant people under the leadership of the priests made a wholesale attack upon the Methodists. Daily, the mobs went through the streets hunting for Methodists. When Daniel Sullivan, a Methodist layman, appealed to the mayor of Cork for protection, the latter replied: "It is your own fault for entertaining these preachers. If you will turn them out of your house I will engage there shall be no more harm done, but if you will not turn them out, you must take what you will get."

The intolerance of Roman Catholicism was not able to deter the fighting spirit of Irish Methodism. Although he was a marked man, John Wesley had the secret of winning the love of the Irish people. He secured converts in the strongest Roman Catholic centers. Of his work in Dublin, Wesley wrote: "In some respects the work of God in Dublin was more remarkable than even in London. (1) It is far greater, in proportion to the time and to the number of people. (2) The work was more pure." In 1752, five years after

Wesley had entered Ireland, he was able to hold the first Irish annual conference. By the year 1844 there were fifty thousand Methodists in Ireland.

The longer Wesley remained in Ireland the more popular and more respected he became. His last tour through Ireland in 1789, when he was eighty-six years of age, resembled a triumphal procession. Wherever he went he was welcomed with honor and affection. At Clanard he found at five A. M. three or four times as many as the house could contain. As he went through Ballyhays, Wesley writes that the "poor people flocked round me on every side, and would not be contented, till I came out of the chaise, and spent some time with them in prayer." At Pallas no building was large enough to hold the crowd. On July 12, 1789, Wesley bade farewell to Ireland. His departure has been described as follows: "Before he went on board he read a hymn; and the crowd, as far as emotion would let them, joined the sainted patriarch in singing. He then dropped upon his knees, and asked God to bless them, their families, the church, and Ireland. Shaking of hands followed; many wept most profusely; and not a few fell on the old man's neck and kissed him. He stepped on deck; the vessel moved; and then, with his hands still lifted in prayer, the winds of heaven wafted him from an island which he dearly loved; and the warm-hearted Irish Methodists saw his face no more."

Early Methodism in Ireland produced great Christians. The violent persecution developed a crusading type of Methodism. The Irish Methodists were so militant that Charles Wesley described them as people "who did not fear what man or devils could do to them." The leaders and laymen of Irish Methodism because of their piety and religious devotion put to shame their Roman Catholic neighbors. Thomas Walsh,

a convert to Methodism, was such a noble Christian that the historian Southey declared that his life might well convince the Roman Catholics that saints are to be found in other communions as well as in the Church of Rome. Wesley said: "I do not remember ever to have known a preacher who in so few years as he remained upon earth was an instrument in converting so many sinners." From Ireland there came to America Robert Strawbridge, Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, who laid the foundations for American Methodism.

John Wesley's work in Ireland should inspire modern Methodists who become discouraged. It is true that the American Methodists have difficult situations to face, but these are small in comparison to the problems which Wesley met in Ireland. Wesley, however, was not discouraged. He took to Ireland the message of divine love as exemplified in the life and teachings of Jesus; and he propagated that message by the fighting spirit of Methodism. If the early Methodists in face of hostile Roman Catholicism could make progress in eighteenth century Ireland, should not the American Methodists take courage in their battle for national righteousness?

CHAPTER XXIII

THE METHODIST INVASION OF SCOTLAND

HE carrying of Methodism to Scotland presented a different problem to John Wesley from that which he had faced in England and Ireland. Scotland was a stronghold of Calvinism. Since the day of John Knox, the Reformation hero of Scotland, the Scotch had firmly believed in predestination. In fact the Presbyterian church was the state church. In the eighteenth century that church held in Scotland a position analogous to that held by the Anglican church in England. Wesley had worked with the Anglicans in England, and with the Roman Catholics in Ireland, but until he went to Scotland he had never labored with people who were predominantly Calvinistic in their theology.

Scotland in the eighteenth century was a religious nation. In the sixteenth century the Scotch people had fought and died for their religion; therefore, their religion had become a part of their national spirit. People attended church services in Scotland; they supported their church; and the clergy were held in high esteem by the people. But Scotland's religion was of the Calvinistic type; it was a cold, formal religion. There was no enthusiasm or emotion to the Calvinism of Scotland. The Scotch churchmen held to the theory that God had, before the beginning of the world, predestined some to salvation and some to damnation. Therefore, because God had already chosen the "elect" there was no incentive for missionary work, or for other agencies of evangelical

Christianity. The religion of Scotland was a religion without spirit and without zeal; it lacked the warmth of Methodism.

Wesley hesitated to enter Scotland. It was hard for him to decide whether or not, in the face of the great spiritual needs of England and Ireland, he should spend any time with the Scotch people, who at least from a Calvinistic standpoint were religiously inclined. For fifteen years Wesley avoided Scotland. When he did go there for the first time in 1751, he tells us that he had no intention of preaching, nor did he imagine that any person would desire him to do so. The occasion for the first visit there was only to pay a short visit to an old friend, Captain Gallatin.

Wesley on this visit to Scotland was surprised to find that the Scotch were eager to hear him. At Musselburgh he preached to a large congregation who "remained," as Wesley says, "as statues from the beginning of the sermon to the end." At Edinburgh a city official and an elder of the state church begged Wesley to stay for a few days and preach to the people of Edinburgh. Wesley was unable to remain, but he promised to return as soon as he could.

Wesley's friends advised him not to spend any time in Scotland because they were dubious of his success there. George Whitefield said to Wesley: "You have no business in Scotland; for your principles are so well known that if you spoke like an angel, none would hear you; and if they did, you would have nothing to do but to dispute with one and another from morning to night." Charles Wesley told his brother: "You may just as well preach to stones as to the Scots." The advice of his friends was not heeded because Wesley had seen that he was needed in Scotland. He informed Whitefield that he intended to work in Scotland as well as in England and Ireland. In the following significant words he explain-

ed to Whitefield his plan of action: "If God sends me, people will hear. And I will give them no provocation to dispute; for I will studiously avoid controverted points, and keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity; and if they still begin to dispute, they may, but I will not dispute with them." John Wesley went to Scotland to help people, not to argue with them.

In 1753 Wesley made his second visit to Scotland, and from that time until his death in 1791, Scotland was always included in Wesley's northern itineraries. He visited Scotland twenty-two times.

Wesley did not have to contend with mob violence in Scotland as he had found in England and Ireland. Physical violence was not Wesley's great problem. As a rule he was received most cordially. Only once while preaching in the open air was an act of rudeness shown to him.

Wesley's greatest problem was how to get a reaction from his Scotch hearers. He was listened to by great crowds, but they seemed to be without emotion and enthusiasm. Wesley described the Scotch people in these words: "They hear much, know everything, and feel nothing. . . They are so wise that they need no more knowledge, and so good they need no more religion." Once in disgust Wesley described them as "the dead, unfeeling multitudes in Scotland." Their sophistication provoked Wesley to plain speech. He said: "I seldom speak so roughly as in Scotland; but I never knew any in Scotland offended at plain dealing." Once he wrote: "I am amazed at these people. I use the most cutting words, and apply them in the most pointed way; still they hear, but feel no more than the seats they sit in."

Even with these obstacles Wesley made progress in Scotland. Small Methodist societies were formed in various places.

At the time of Wesley's death there were between one and two thousand members in the Methodist societies of Scotland. Important people like Lady Maxwell of Edinburgh and Dr. Gillies of Glasgow added dignity to Methodism in Scotland. From Scotland came many helpers who aided Wesley elsewhere. Thomas Rankin, a Scotch Methodist, became such a prominent leader that in 1772 he was sent by Wesley to supervise the work of the Methodist preachers in America. Alexander Mather, who became a Methodist under Wesley's preaching, was one of Wesley's confidential advisers, and after Wesley's death was elected the second president of the Methodist Conference in England. Adam Clarke, the great Methodist theologian and writer, was also of Scotch extraction.

The influence of Methodism in Scotland, however, cannot be estimated by the number of Methodist societies founded there. Scotland did not necessarily need a new church. Scotland did not have the thousands of people who had lost touch with the church as was the case in England; nor did she have the ignorance which went with the Roman Catholicism of Ireland. What Scotland needed most of all was a reform of the state church; the destruction of its religious formalism; the upsetting of its satisfied spiritual attitude; and the moderation of its doctrine of predestination.

Methodism's great contribution to the Scotch religious life was its influence in changing the tone and direction of the Scotch state church. Wesley served as a stimulant to the church of Scotland. He helped that church to get religious zeal and fervor in place of its coldness, formalism and intellectualism. Butler says Wesley was for Scotland "a spiritual splendor." The Methodist movement assimilated itself into the life and work of all sections of the Scotch church, and acted as a powerful force for spiritual ardor and religious

activity. Scotch Presbyterianism was changed from the saying of so many prayers, morning and evening, and a firm belief in predestination to the ruling habit of the soul. John Wesley brought back to the Church of Scotland personal religion. The small Methodist societies have influenced Scotch religion by being centers of spiritual light and life. John Wesley's work in Scotland changed the Church of Scotland from a cold and self-satisfied church to a warm and energetic institution.

John Wesley and the early Methodists also taught the Scotch to sing hymns. Wesley was the pioneer in introducing hymns into the worship of Scotch churches. Before Wesley's visits to Scotland the singing of human hymns was opposed by the church leaders. Wesley, however, was surprised to find that the people would sing hymns if allowed to do so. Often Wesley would tell those who did not believe in singing hymns to leave the audience, but scarcely anyone would retire. An outbreak of sacred song in Scotland accompanied the Wesleyan Revival. It was assimilated into the hymnology of the Scotch churches and thereby has been a powerful influence in moulding Scotch religion.

From another angle the Scotch church owes much to Wesley; namely, the weakening of the theory of predestination. Wesley avoided theological arguments in Scotland, but his preaching of the doctrine of free salvation for all mankind had its influence. Predestination lost its great hold upon Scotland after John Wesley's visits there. It is interesting to note that shortly after Wesley's work in Scotland, the Church of Scotland had a religious awakening of its own. Although that church still talked about the "elect" and "predestination" and other Calvinistic terms, yet it became interested in the extension of religion to others than the "elect."

The organization of guilds in connection with the church was a copy of Wesley's religious societies. The home and foreign missionary work which the Church of Scotland soon started was the acceptance of the evangelical principles of Wesley. In a quiet manner John Wesley lessened the power of Calvinism in Scotland.

The people of Scotland appreciated the work of John Wesley. During his lifetime many acts of courtesy and respect were paid to him by the Scotch. For example, in 1772, two cities, Perth and Arbroath, presented him with their freedom and enrolled him as an honorary burgess. This was a public acknowledgement of the respect which Scottish cities had for John Wesley. Even after Wesley's death the Scotch people did not forget him. One hundred years later, on March 2, 1891, on the centenary of Wesley's death, there was held in St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, a memorial service in honor of John Wesley. Educators, statesmen, and prominent clergymen of all denominations took part. The orator of the occasion described Wesley as "the greatest religious reformer of modern times." The periodical, "The Scotsman," in reporting this meeting, declared that it was "an independent testimony from minds well able to judge of the great religious movement, of which Wesley was the great propelling force."

The story of Wesley's work in Scotland has been presented for one definite purpose. It shows one phase of the fighting spirit of Methodism which is so often overlooked; namely, that Methodism through its influence has contributed mightily to the growth and expansion of churches and institutions which do not bear the name of Methodist. The story of Methodism in Scotland is a good example of this. From a numerical standpoint, Methodism has never been strong in that country, yet all prominent church leaders of Scotland will

agree that it was due to Wesley and the early Methodists that the Church of Scotland was reformed and revived. Too often we think of the fighting spirit of Methodism only in terms of the number of churches and members which Methodism possesses. We should not forget that Methodism has also helped the world by influencing the tone and color of all other denominations.

Methodism has had the unique characteristic of influencing non-Methodists toward righteousness. Years ago, Methodism alone preached the doctrine of universal redemption; today all Protestant denominations proclaim it. At one time Methodists had a monopoly on militant Christianity; today all Protestant churches have caught our spirit. There are thousands of members in other denominations who were converted in Methodist revivals. Just as John Wesley was an influence for the betterment of the Church of Scotland, just so has the fighting spirit of Methodism since Wesley's day been a salutary influence, regardless of creed, for the welfare of all mankind. That is why the power and influence of Methodism can never be stated in terms of numbers and statistics.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ORATOR OF METHODISM

MANY individuals aided John Wesley in the formation of Methodism. He was helped by his brother, Charles Wesley, writer of the great hymns of Methodism. We cannot forget the Methodist lay preachers, who for a mere pittance, made it possible for Wesley to spread the gospel through England. In addition to these John Wesley had another powerful helper in his work. That man was George Whitefield, aptly called "The Orator of Methodism."

George Whitefield, born at Gloucester, England, in 1714, was eleven years younger than John Wesley. He did not, however, have the cultural background of Wesley. When Whitefield was only two years old his father died, and his mother, in order to support herself and children, was forced to work in a tavern. It was in the barroom of a tavern that George Whitefield served as a helper until he was thirteen years of age. There he was surrounded by drunken brawls, cursing, gambling, and other vices. With such a background the historian Ninde could truthfully say of Whitefield that the "marvel is that he was not a common bartender all his life."

George Whitefield had ambition, and his mother wanted her son to have a fair chance in life. It happened that in Gloucester there was an Anglican church school, which, because of its endowment, was able to educate poor boys. In this school Whitefield was a student until he finished his ele-

mentary and high school training. Then his ambition urged him to obtain a higher education. In 1732 he entered Oxford University, where he paid his expenses by acting as the servant of wealthy students.

Because George Whitefield did menial labor at Oxford he was shunned by the plutocratic students. There were, however, two students who respected the boy who was sacrificing to secure an education. These two students were John and Charles Wesley. They befriended Whitefield; they were kind to him. It happened that because of their influence Whitefield became a member of the Holy Club at Oxford.

This contact with John and Charles Wesley stimulated in Whitefield a vital interest in religion. Although Whitefield had been a nominal Christian since the age of sixteen he had never given much thought to the spiritual things of life. But he was destined to have a vital religious experience at Oxford University. In May, 1735, Whitefield had a great Christian experience, at which time he says "a ray of light was instantly darted in upon my soul." That experience proved to be the vital hour of his life. As long as he lived Whitefield cherished the spot at Oxford University where he met his Saviour. Often he would say: "I know the spot. . . . Whenever I go to Oxford, I cannot help running to the spot where Jesus Christ first revealed himself to me, and gave me new birth."

That religious experience at Oxford was the turning point in Whitefield's career. Like John Wesley his heart was "strangely warmed." He had met his Saviour and was imbued with a mighty passion for the saving of souls. Never during the remainder of his life did he lose faith in his Saviour. Like John Wesley he entered the ministry of the Church of England. Although he was only twenty-one years of age,

he was ordained on June 30, 1736, as deacon in the Church of England.

Upon the delivery of his first sermon Whitefield established his reputation as a preacher. To deliver his maiden sermon he went back to his old home church at Gloucester. The great throng that gathered in the church to hear the "boy" whom they had known only as a helper in a barroom received a great surprise on that Sunday. Never before had they heard a sermon such as was delivered by the twenty-one-year-old youth. "He preached like a lion," exclaimed one of his hearers. So powerful and striking was this sermon that a charge was made to the bishop that Whitefield's preaching had driven fifteen of his listeners mad. By this first sermon, the "boy preacher" leaped into fame.

Whitefield was assigned by his bishop to a small parish at Dummer, a quiet village, much too small for Whitefield. In that tiny place he was "like a lion in a cage, an eagle chained to a perch." Whitefield's message was meant for more people; and the outside world began to insist on hearing this marvelous preacher. This demand to hear Whitefield became so great that in a few months he was back in the large cities. At Bristol he filled churches not only twice on Sundays but on every week day as well. After a month there he was obliged to leave in the early hours of the morning, to avoid the great company that intended to follow him to London. In London he preached to even larger crowds. There he made such an impression that some one has said: "On Sunday morning, long before day, you might see streets filled with people going to church."

Whitefield had a vital message for England and the people heard him glady, but he was too enthusiastic for the church leaders of his day. At the height of his work he suddenly

found the doors of the Anglican church, his own church, closed to him. The conservative clergy were not interested in a personal religious experience. Whitefield was causing the formerly satisfied laymen to ask questions. To the horror of the church leaders Whitefield was starting a "revival." Hence orders went out from the bishops that the churches were to be closed to George Whitefield.

Whitefield, however, was not daunted by the action of the Anglican bishops. When the church refused him the privilege of preaching in consecrated houses of worship, Whitefield went outside to the masses. On February 17, 1739, he went to Kingswood, a small district outside of Bristol, and there, standing on a small knoll, he preached in the open air to two hundred miners. "I thought," declared Whitefield, "I might be doing the service of my Creator who had a mountain for his pulpit and the heavens for a sounding board." Whitefield's first field congregation numbered two hundred, the second nearly two thousand, and the third five thousand. How inspiring it must have been to have seen Whitefield preaching in the open air to those poor, neglected and dirty miners. So powerful was Whitefield's appeal that tears came from the eyes of the miners, tracing white furrows down their smutty cheeks. After Whitefield's experience with the miners at Kingswood he saw that all churches were too small for him. From that time forth he preached to thousands instead of hundreds. No boundary of sea or land could restrain him.

Whitefield's evangelistic work was not confined to England. On February 2, 1738, he made his first visit to America. Between that date and his death in 1770, he made seven trips to America. On behalf of religion in the British Colo-

nies he crossed the Atlantic Ocean thirteen times. He also made fourteen visits to Scotland.

George Whitefield knew how to deliver his great message. Many are the testimonies as to his eloquence. Whitefield's printed sermons do not appear to be extraordinary; in fact, they seem commonplace. The secret of their power was in their presentation by Whitefield; "the expressive eyes, the matchless voice, the trembling lips, the face that seemed to shine as with a mystic light." His voice was both sweet and powerful. One person declared that his voice was "perfect music." Another stated that Whitefield "had probably the most musical and carrying voice that ever issued from a human throat. Its sweetness hung in the charmed ears of the crowd; its cadences resembled the rise and fall of the notes of some great singer."

His voice was so powerful that it carried conviction. He preached as if every sermon were his last sermon and as if the audience were hearing his parting words. The influence of Whitefield upon his hearers is best shown by his effect upon the skeptic, Benjamin Franklin. In his own words Franklin admits the power of the oratory of Whitefield. "I happened," says Franklin, "some time after to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection; and silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket into the collection dish, gold and all."

Whitefield by his great convictions and his marvelous eloquence turned the thoughts of people to religion. Audi-

ences never had enough of him. Often they would beg him to continue his sermon. In regard to Whitefield's influence in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin writes: "It is wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless and indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world was growing religious." So great was the effect of Whitefield's ministry in Philadelphia, that today his statue stands on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. Of his work in New England, a contemporary wrote: "Our mechanics shut up their shops, and day laborers throw down their tools to go out and hear him preach, and few return unaffected." In Boston, the house where Whitefield was entertained was besieged with men and women begging for a talk with Whitefield in regard to their spiritual state.

Not only was Whitefield a great orator but he was also a prodigious worker. Once in the space of thirty-six hours he preached five times, expounded four times and attended a love feast that ended at four o'clock in the morning. He preached daily for two months preceding his death and on the day of his death he preached a two hour sermon. In all he delivered eighteen thousand sermons in thirty-four years. To a friend who asked Whitefield to spare himself, he replied: "When I am offering Jesus to poor sinners, I cannot forbear exerting all my powers." On another occasion, in reply to a similar request, he declared: "I had rather wear out than rust out." "I am determined in Christ's strength," Whitefield would say, "to die fighting, though it be on my stumps." He died on September 30, 1770, dying as he had longed to die, "on the field of battle."

Methodism has always been proud of George Whitefield. We are happy to claim as our own the most eloquent

preacher that ever lived. Whitefield gave to early Methodism a warmth and glow that it might never have possessed without him. By his eloquence he made religion an experience to many to whom it had previously been only a tradition. By his fighting spirit and oratory he vivified for many the gospel of Jesus Christ. The combination in Whitefield of a dynamic personality, a superior faith and an unequaled eloquence greatly aided the rise of Methodism. He was the first of that great Methodist army of silver tongued orators who have devoted their unique talents to the proclaiming with tongues of fire the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whitefield had a message for mankind; he also knew how to deliver that message.

CHAPTER XXV

TO THE ARISTOCRACY ALSO

JOHN WESLEY began his great religious work among the poor, the uneducated, and the common people of England. Such were the first who heard him gladly and who became the pioneer members of the Methodist societies. Because of this fact it has often been thought that early Methodism was confined to the poorer classes of English society. Such a conclusion, however, is not fully justified for Methodism also made an appeal to others. Early Methodism had as one of its greatest leaders an aristocrat, Lady Selina, Countess of Huntingdon.

In 1707 there was born in Leicestershire, England, Selina Shirley, daughter of the Earl of Ferrers. By birth she was of ancient and honorable descent. At the age of twenty-one she was married to the Earl of Huntingdon. Since the Earl of Huntingdon was of royal descent, this marriage gave Lady Huntingdon an added social prestige. With a country estate and with a winter home in London, the Earl and Lady Huntingdon were leaders of the highest social circles. They were intimate friends of most of the English nobility.

Not only was Lady Huntingdon of the aristocracy but she was also a very remarkable woman. She has been described as having possessed exceptional qualities of mind and attractions of manner. Her personality, combined with her gentle spirit, caused her to be admired and loved by all whom she met. "Our dear Lady Huntingdon" was the title so often given to her by her friends. So prominent was the name of

Lady Huntingdon that when in 1744 John Wesley dedicated a set of poems to her he remarked that the mention of her name with the poems would induce many to read them.

Because of her social position and her many attainments, Lady Huntingdon was envied by many people. It would seem that she was the most fortunate of all women. She was welcomed by the royalty; she had daily contacts with the socially elite; and she had a very happy home. Yet Lady Huntingdon was unhappy. She secured no lasting pleasure from her social position and her wealth. She recognized the superficialities of the aristocracy. She longed for real happiness; for a happiness that would satisfy her hungry soul.

It was through the agency of Methodism that Lady Huntingdon saw a different aspect of life. Her sister-in-law, Lady Hastings, urged by curiosity, had attended some Methodist services. At these meetings Lady Hastings came to see the insufficiency of her social life and came to know Jesus Christ as her Saviour. Her curiosity had proved to be a blessing. She became a convert to Methodism. One day Lady Hastings in conversation with Lady Huntingdon declared that "since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation, she had been as happy as an angel." Lady Huntingdon yearned for a similar happiness.

During a long illness which followed shortly after this conversation, Lady Huntingdon tells us that she came to realize that "her heart was deceitful above all things." A great change came over her life; she found peace with God. "All her wanderings," declares a great historian, "were at once happily terminated—her doubts were removed, her tears were dried up." It happened that John Wesley was then preaching near the Huntingdon country estate. To him Lady Huntingdon sent a message, declaring that she was de-

termined to live for Jesus Christ and to support the Methodists in their work.

Lady Huntingdon was thoroughly converted to Methodism. She started at once to carry out the views taught by Wesley. She began to visit the sick and the poor in her neighborhood; she interested herself in the education of the children on her husband's estate; and she urged her friends to attend the Methodist services. She became known as "Lady Bountiful of Donnington Park."

At the prime of life, however, great sorrow came to Lady Huntingdon. In 1744 two of her sons died of smallpox. She had not recovered from this blow when she suffered in the death of her husband another tragedy. Thus at the age of thirty-nine Lady Huntingdon was left a widow.

During the lifetime of her husband Lady Huntingdon's social duties as mistress of the Huntingdon home had kept her from extreme activity in religious affairs. But now the changed conditions allowed her to devote herself more fully to the services of Christ. Released as she was from her many social duties she gave all her time and energy in advancing the Methodist revival. She joined actively with John Wesley in the evangelization of England. She gave the remaining forty-five years of her life to the cause of Methodism.

Lady Huntingdon rendered the unique service of spreading Methodism among the aristocracy of England. She sought to raise the spiritual tone of the wealthy and the nobility. She began to entertain her aristocratic friends on Sunday evening; but instead of making the occasions the usual social affairs she turned them into religious services. For these gatherings Lady Huntingdon secured George Whitefield and other Methodist preachers to proclaim the Methodist gospel to the aristocracy.

Much good resulted from Lady Huntingdon's efforts in her social group. "Some of the great of this world," she wrote to a friend, "hear with me the Gospel patiently." Of her work, George Whitefield said, "She (Lady Huntingdon) goes on from strength to strength—the prospect of doing good to the rich that attend her ladyship's house is very encouraging." In a letter to Sir Horace Mann, who was then absent from England, Sir Horace Walpole described the work of Lady Huntingdon, and warned him that if he ever returned to England he would have to be prepared to face the Methodists. "The Methodists," continued Walpole, "love you big sinners as proper subjects to work upon—and indeed they have a bountiful harvest."

Lady Huntingdon, because of her influence with the officials of the government rendered a great service to early Methodism. When the mayors and the justices of peace refused to give protection to the Methodists, it was Lady Huntingdon who carried their complaint to the King of England. When John Nelson, a Methodist lay preacher, was forced in opposition to his conscientious scruples, to enter the British army, it was Lady Huntingdon's political influence that secured his release. When David Garrick, the great English actor, presented the play, "The Minor," which was an attack upon Methodists, Lady Huntingdon persuaded him to withdraw the play from the stage.

Lady Huntingdon's work was not confined to the aristocracy. On a visit to Brighton she came in contact with a Methodist society that was too poor to own a chapel. The spirit of the struggling society so impressed this good woman that she proceeded to sell her jewels, and with the proceeds erected a splendid chapel. This was her first chapel, but before her death "Lady Huntingdon's chapels" were scattered

all over England. It became her custom to purchase halls, theatres, and dilapidated buildings and to remodel them for religious purposes.

Just as John Wesley had his own lay preachers, so likewise Lady Huntingdon gathered about her an active corps of ministers, whom she appointed to her various chapels. All the expenses connected with her chapels and preachers were assumed by Lady Huntingdon. In company with her preachers she would also conduct evangelistic tours through England, thereby aiding Wesley in promoting the Methodist revival.

Lady Huntingdon's work increased so rapidly that she was soon unable to secure sufficient number of trained preachers for her chapels. While she was facing this problem, six students at Oxford University were expelled because they held "Methodistical tenets." This incident determined Lady Huntingdon to found a theological school where Methodist students could be educated without having to face the insults which they received at Oxford. In August, 1768, Lady Huntingdon opened Trevecca College as an institution for the training of ministers. There, free of all expenses, a student could remain for three years. From Trevecca College went out hundreds of trained young men, who, due to the liberality of Lady Huntingdon, were better able to proclaim the gospel throughout the nation.

The carrying out of this large religious program was a heavy financial burden on Lady Huntingdon. Nearly every cent of her large income was expended in her work. It is estimated that during her lifetime she gave away $500,000 for the support of her chapels and her preachers. A short time before Lady Huntingdon's death she was forced, in order to continue her religious plans, to move from her form-

er luxurious establishment to a small house equipped with simple furniture.

Although Lady Huntingdon was a Methodist, she, like John Wesley, wished to carry on her work within the Church of England. She loved the Anglican church and hoped to help it by the building of chapels, by the financial support of religious work, and by the education of young ministers. For a number of years, because of Lady Huntingdon's high social position, and because of her designating all her preachers as her personal chaplains, she was not molested by the Anglican leaders. But the "church of lost opportunities," true to type, finally informed her that she must conform to the rules of the church or leave it. In her desperation she carried her case to the courts, where the final decision was made that she must either abandon her chapels or register them as Dissenting chapels. As there was no other alternative, she began in 1779 to register her chapels as dissenting meeting houses and thereby the "Lady Huntingdon Connexion" came into existence. Sadly Lady Huntingdon declared: "I am to be cast out of the church now, only for what I have been doing these forty years—speaking and living for Jesus Christ." From that date until her death in 1791 Lady Huntingdon, with great executive skill, carried on the work of her "Connexion." She won the title of the "Queen of Methodism."

Lady Huntingdon was forced to suffer persecution with Wesley and the other Methodists. Her wealth and social position could not save her from attacks from the enemies of religion. Often mobs, instigated by the higher classes, would stage riots outside her house. Even the historian Southey slandered Lady Huntingdon, by writing that her religious feelings originated in a "decided insanity in her family."

But the devout Christian spirit of Lady Huntingdon as-

sured for her the respect of all decent people. Many have been the tributes of praise given to her. George III, King of England, on one occasion declared: "I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon for every diocese in the kingdom." The Prince of Wales said: "When I am dying, I think I shall be happy to seize the skirt of Lady Huntingdon." She was described by Whitefield as "that lady elect, that mother in Israel, that mirror of true and undefiled religion."

Methodism owes much to Lady Huntingdon. By her rank and her wealth she aided the Methodist revival in a way which Wesley and the other leaders could never have done. In her work with the aristocracy she opened an entirely new field of labor to Methodism. She showed that the fighting spirit of Methodism had as much to offer the aristocracy as it had to offer the common people.

Methodism of the twentieth century needs more Lady Huntingdons. Why do leaders in high social circles give so much of their time to the endless rounds of social events and devote so little to the work of the Kingdom of God? What a power Methodism would be if the wealthy ladies of Methodism would only in a small way follow the example of Lady Huntingdon! What an influence for good they would exert upon the lower classes of society! Then, too, what a great reward would come to those who would dedicate their wealth and position to Christ. They like Lady Huntingdon would experience supreme happiness in life; a joy which all the superficial pleasures of high society can never give. Early Methodism had in Lady Huntingdon an aristocrat who had the fighting spirit of Methodism. Oh that modern Methodism might have many Lady Huntingdons; more wealthy women with the strength of character to seek "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

CHAPTER XXVI

CROSSING THE RUBICON

JOHN WESLEY loved the Church of England. He had every reason to love it; for it was the church of his parents and the church of his youth. He had received the sacrament of baptism in the Church of England; he had been confirmed by an Anglican bishop; and he had taken the vows of an Anglican minister. He firmly believed that the Church of England was the best of all denominations. So loyal was Wesley to his church that when he was urged to leave it, he exclaimed: "I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and that none who regards my judgment will ever separate from it." He was so true to the Anglican Church that he once wrote: "When the Methodists leave the Church of England, God will leave them." As late as 1782 when he was asked: "Is it your wish that people called Methodists should become a body separate from the church?" his answer, as upon former occasions, was an emphatic "No."

Although Wesley knew that the Methodists had a higher type of piety than was found in the Anglican Church, yet his loyalty to the church of his youth prevented him from favoring a separation. His plan was that the Methodists should have their own societies but that these societies should remain within the Church of England. "It is very possible," declared Wesley, "to be united to Christ and to the Church of England at the same time. . . . We do not need to be separate from the church in order to preserve our allegiance to Christ."

Wesley showed his loyalty to his church by endeavoring in every possible manner to avoid friction between the Methodists and the Anglicans. He refused to conduct Methodist meetings at the time when there were services at the Established Church. Wesley always attended the Anglican services when he could do so, and urged all his followers to do likewise. He announced that Methodist houses of worship were not to be called "churches" but rather "meeting houses" or "chapels." He denied to his lay preachers the use of the title "minister." He did not allow them to administer the sacraments. These facts show that Wesley's original intention was to form a religious society within the Church of England and not to organize a new denomination.

The Church of England has truly been called "The church of lost opportunities." That church had in John Wesley a great moral leader who would have given to it a new spiritual atmosphere. He could have revived the Church of England. He would have been able to have drawn the common people back to the Established Church. He could have put warmth into the chilly air of the Anglican Church. He would have turned the attention of that church to the poor, the uneducated, the sick and the needy of England. But with a blindness, hardly conceivable, the Anglican Church refused to find a place for Wesley. That church closed its doors to its loyal son.

The bishops of the church became hostile to Wesley. They could not bear the enthusiasm of Wesley and the Methodists. In reply to the demands of Wesley for a deeper spiritual tone in the Church of England, came the answer: "If you do not like the Church of England as it is, you can leave it." In a letter to a group of Methodists, an Anglican bishop wrote: "We cannot but regard you as our most dangerous enemies."

Therefore the bishops began to mistreat Wesley and the members of the Methodist societies. The bishops wrote and warned against the Methodists. The Anglican clergy, taking their cue from their ecclesiastical superiors, spoke against Methodism; while the Anglican laymen outdid the animosity of both bishops and clergy by stoning and persecuting the Methodists.

The Anglican leaders could not understand the use of lay preachers by the Methodists. This was the basis for another attack upon the Methodists. "But who are these 'lay lubbers?'" asked a leading Anglican official. "They are," he declared, answering his own question, "Wesley's ragged legion of preaching tinkers, scavengers, draymen and chimney sweepers. No man would do this unless he were as unprincipled as a rock." To this charge Wesley replied: "O sir, what an idle thing it is for you to dispute about lay preachers. Is not a lay preacher preferable to a drunken preacher; to a cursing, drunken preacher?"

Open-air preaching was denounced by the Anglican leaders. Bishop Gibson declared that the "Methodists had the boldness to preach in the fields and other places and by public advertisement to invite the rabble to be their hearers." If the Methodists wished by such means to deal with the proletariat, Bishop Gibson felt that it was the duty of the Methodists to leave the Church of England. When Wesley was informed by the church authorities that the laws of the church forbade field preaching, he aptly retorted that the laws of the church also forbade the card playing which was so commonly practiced by the Anglican clergy.

The Church of England went out of its way to make it difficult for Wesley and the Methodists. Because of his respect for the Anglican clergy Wesley had refused to allow

his preachers to administer the sacraments; but now many of the Anglican ministers refused to permit the Methodists to partake of the Lord's Supper. On one occasion when Charles Wesley went forward to receive the sacrament, the Anglican rector yelled at him: "Avant, Satan, avant." The Church of England refused to allow Wesley's chapels to be registered as chapels of the Anglican Church, thereby forcing him to have them registered as Dissenting chapels. Wesley had urged his followers to attend the services of the Established Church, but soon the Methodists found that they were not welcome at the services. No good Methodist cared to attend a religious service where perhaps half of the sermon consisted of a condemnation of Wesley and the Methodists. It was evident that the Methodists were not desired within the Anglican Church.

Gradually, step by step, Wesley was forced to part company with the church of his youth, and the church which he dearly loved. He saw that the Anglican Church had rejected the spiritual movement of which he was the leader. His followers demanded a separation from the church of which they had so little in common, and from which they received only curses and persecution. With an aching heart Wesley faced this problem. But since the choice was between a loyalty to his church and a loyalty to his Saviour, there could never be any real doubt as to his final decision. As he surveyed the spiritual needs of England, and saw the utter inability of the Church of England to care for these needs, Wesley was forced to put aside his love for the church of his fathers. In immortal words he made his choice. He declared: "Church or no church, we must attend to the saving of souls." That became his slogan. If the Church of England would not allow him to work from within, he would go to the outside.

He would save souls regardless of the church. There was never a formal declaration of separation from the Church of England. Wesley lived and died a member of the Church of England, but before his death he had laid the foundations for an independent Methodism.

Wesley's first step toward separation was to ordain ministers to administer the sacraments. Formerly he had believed that no preacher could administer the sacraments unless he had been ordained by an Anglican bishop. Wesley now changed his mind on this point. A study of the apostolic church and the reading of the writings of the early church fathers caused Wesley to reject the theory of "apostolic succession," held by the Anglican Church. He came to the conclusion that the bishops did not have a monopoly on the ordination of ministers; that he had as much right as had the Anglican bishops. Therefore on September 2, 1784, Wesley broke all Anglican precedents by ordaining Thomas Coke to be the superintendent of the Methodists in America, and Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to be elders in America. In 1785 Wesley ordained ministers for Scotland, in 1786 for Ireland and the West Indies, and in 1789 for England. When the Anglican authorities asked Wesley to show reason why he had done such a terrible act, Wesley replied that he had not time to go into the matter, as life was too short. This statement is typical of Wesley's attitude. The people of England needed to be saved and when the Church of England refused to ordain his helpers, Wesley decided that "church or no church" he would ordain his own helpers.

In the same year, 1784, Wesley drew up the famous Deed of Declaration by which Methodism at the death of Wesley became a separate ecclesiastical body. Wesley feared that upon his death the organization which he had developed would

break up. Wesley therefore "in order" as he said, "to fix them (the Methodists) upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure," enrolled in the High Court of Chancery his Deed of Declaration by which he defined and gave legal existence to the "Conference of people called Methodists." By this deed Wesley appointed one hundred of his preachers to have charge of Methodism in England after his death. They were to appoint the preachers to their circuits, admit new preachers into the conference, and control the property of the Methodists. This action assured the independency of Methodism. It was destined to be a denomination separate from the Church of England.

Thus it happened that the Church of England lost thousands of devout members. "The church of lost opportunities" had no place for the Methodists. By this short-sighted policy an act was committed of which that church has repented ever since. "If our leaders had only been more wise, Methodism would now be a part of our church," has been the lamentation of many Anglican leaders since the day of Wesley.

Methodism today is grateful to God that circumstances arose to force the early Methodists to break from the Church of England. We could never have had the fighting spirit of Methodism within the bounds of Anglicanism. Methodism could never have been confined by the forms and traditions of the Anglican Church; because it is against the nature of Methodism to worship traditions. The Methodist preacher could never have been limited to the prayer book; because it is opposite to the spirit of Methodism to use formal prayers. The Anglican gown would have been a hindrance to the enthusiastic Methodist minister. The message of Methodism could never have been confined within the walls of the Anglican Church. Methodism has never been willing to agree

that ordination by an Anglican bishop is an absolute prerequisite for the proclaiming of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The Anglican Church lacked the vision and the machinery for the carrying out of the fighting spirit of Methodism. With a heart that had been "strangely warmed," Methodism was too large, too vital, and too powerful to be contained within the Anglican Church of the eighteenth century or of any century.

Although the Methodists and the Anglicans came to the parting of the ways, yet Methodism will always have a tender feeling for the Anglican Church. Because John Wesley loved the Anglican Church is reason enough for our respect for it. Modern Methodists admire John Wesley for his great love and attachment to the church of his fathers and the church of his youth. Oh, that the Methodists of the twentieth century might have that same love and affection for their own church. But regardless of this respect for the Church of England, the Methodists of all ages will thank God that John Wesley was brave enough to "cross the Rubicon"; big enough to declare with spiritual positiveness: "Church or no church, we must attend to the saving of souls."

CHAPTER XXVII

"TOLERANCE"

UR nation is in the midst of another presidential campaign. Men are offering themselves as candidates for the presidency. One of the prominent candidates is opposed to prohibition. He has publicly stated that he hopes to make possible the day when he can again put his foot upon the brass rail of a saloon and blow the froth from a glass of beer. As governor of his state he has in every possible way endeavored to block the enactment and enforcement of prohibition laws. This man is also a leader in the famous Tammany Hall organization which for years has been noted for its political corruption.

Such a record does not appeal to sincere Christian men and women. The majority of church people do not favor elevating to the highest executive office in America a man who is in favor of the return of the legalized sale of alcoholic beverages. There are many good citizens who also oppose the extension of Tammany Hall to the White House.

Especially is Methodism opposed to any "wet" candidate. Methodism from its beginning has favored prohibition. As early as 1743 John Wesley forbade the members of the Methodist societies to drink, buy, or sell spirituous liquors. That regulation is still one of the General Rules of Methodism. Methodists were among the first in America to protest against alcohol. They have supported the eighteenth amendment and the Volstead Act. Methodists have never favored a "wet" candidate for any public office.

This prominent candidate, however, is not without friends.

He is a member of the Roman Catholic church, which fact assures him of the undivided support of that denomination. As a friend of the saloon, he has the support of the brewers, the saloonkeepers, and all who profit from the nefarious liquor traffic. He is assured sufficient funds for his campaign from that source alone. Again, he favors unrestricted immigration, because, since the majority of the European immigrants are Roman Catholics, every immigrant means usually one more member for the Roman Catholic church in America. All the believers in unrestricted immigration, which includes the majority of the Jews, will vote for him. He will have the support of the people who believe in the "open Sunday." He has the backing of the professional politicians of one of our greatest parties. In order to secure federal offices, these petty politicians, without regard to the principles involved, fall in line.

The decent citizen will not vote for a man who is opposed to the prohibition laws of the nation; for one who, because of his Roman Catholicism, has *ipso facto*, the support of all members of that church; for one who favors unrestricted immigration; and for one who appeals to the professional office holders. No man could be elected to the presidency upon a platform embodying the aforesaid points. It would mean political suicide to campaign upon these issues.

The result is that America is witnessing today the most subtle political propaganda that it has ever seen. The word "tolerance" has suddenly become very popular among unexpected groups. The "wets" and the Roman Catholics know that they cannot elect their candidate upon his record and beliefs, so they are endeavoring to hide the real issues behind the cry of "toleration." America is witnessing the pitiful attempt of an intolerant church to become suddenly, and for

obvious reasons, the champion of tolerance. From Roman Catholic altars, from subsidized newspapers, from "wet" headquarters, from professional politicians, there comes the cry that if you do not vote for this Roman Catholic candidate, you are intolerant, narrow minded, and a bigot. The propaganda proclaims that if you dare to vote against this candidate, you do so because you are simply intolerant of his religion. The "wets" and Roman Catholics are using the word "tolerance" to cover a "multitude of sins." As an example of this well laid plan, Cardinal Hayes of New York only recently had published in the American newspapers the statement that when the true history of religious freedom is written, the Roman Catholic church will be shown to have been the most tolerant denomination. A person who understands church history knows that such a statement is an unqualified falsehood. The world has not yet forgotten the Roman Catholic Inquisition of the Middle Ages, the burning of John Huss, and the intolerance of twentieth century Roman Catholicism in South America.

Another part of this subtle propaganda is to call all Protestant denominations intolerant. The Baptists, the Presbyterians, and especially the Methodists are severely denounced as hypocrites and bigots. The "wets" and Roman Catholic leaders refuse to admit that Methodists have never supported "wet" candidates in the past. They refuse to acknowledge that Methodists have always opposed men that stand for the things for which the candidate from New York is most noted. "Intolerance" is the only word they can use. It seems that from New York headquarters there has gone out the order to attack the Baptists and Methodists as being "intolerant." At any rate, the metropolitan newspapers, and even the local papers and the aspiring stump speakers, have taken the word

"tolerance" as their text. If a sincere Methodist layman does not favor the "wet" candidate he is at once denounced by the subsidized newspapers as being "intolerant." It is clever propaganda. No one wants to be considered intolerant or to be called a bigot. These political leaders, therefore, believe that many people, to avoid the name of "bigot," will be forced to line up on the side of the candidate from New York.

The writer resents this premeditated attack upon Methodism. It is one of the greatest falsehoods of history to call Methodists intolerant. The best reply to these charges is to review Methodism's record of tolerance. Methodism has no record of intolerance which it needs to apologize for or endeavor to hide. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was the champion of religious liberty. He was the defender of freedom in every field of life. The writer challenges the Roman Catholics to produce a leader who can compare with the broadness and tolerance of John Wesley.

John Wesley showed the spirit of tolerance by declaring that Methodists "think and let think." No one idea did he seek more diligently to impress upon his followers. "I have no more right," declared Wesley, "to object to a man because he holds opinions different from mine than I have to separate from a man because he wears a wig while I wear none." On another occasion he said, "Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires that they should allow him." "Condemn no man," Wesley advised, "for not thinking as you think; let every man enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself; let every one use his own judgment, since every man must give an account of himself to God." Have any Roman Catholic leaders, except in presidential campaigns, ever uttered such similar tolerant words?

John Wesley exemplified the spirit of tolerance by refusing to be bound by ancient traditions or by autocratic religious leaders. In 1744 at the first Methodist annual conference ever held, Wesley and his preachers declared that they would submit only as far as their judgments should be convinced to "bishops, convocations or general council." So much did Wesley stress liberty in religious thought that he once asserted: "So far as one departs from true, genuine reason, so far he departs from Christianity." "Private judgment in religious matters," insisted Wesley, "is an inalienable right." Which do you consider the tolerant church: a church like the Methodist which allows private judgment in religious matters, or one, such as the Roman Catholic, in which all religious problems have been decided years ago by infallible councils and infallible popes?

Wesley showed his tolerance in this respect for other Christian denominations. He did not believe in narrow sectarianism. In order to broaden the religious horizon of the Methodists, Wesley adopted the policy of reading to his societies accounts of the work done by other churches. Referring to the various denominations, he said: "Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?" He refused to argue over trivial denominational differences. "I believe," he declared, "infants ought to be baptized; and this may be done by dipping or sprinkling. If you are otherwise persuaded, be so still, and follow your own persuasion. Let these smaller points stand aside. Let them never come into sight." "I am a member of the Church of England," Wesley would often say, "but I love good men of every denomination." What a different attitude is taken by the Roman Catholic church. That church has never retracted, nay it has repeated, even this

year the words of Pope Pius IX in 1854: "It must be held as of faith, that out of the Roman Apostolic church there is no salvation; that she is the only ark of safety, and whosoever is not in her perishes in the deluge. . . . He who is outside the one visible church of Christ by his own fault cannot be saved." Which man represented tolerance, John Wesley or Pope Pius IX?

Wesley showed his spirit of tolerance in his respect for his opponents. He cherished no resentment even against the men who attacked him bitterly and uncharitably. Bishop Lavington had charged Wesley with "sophistry, prevarication, evasion, pertness, conceitedness, scurrility, sauciness and effrontery." Yet Wesley forgave him and in his journal there is found this entry: "I was well pleased to partake of the Lord's Supper with my old opponent, Bishop Lavington. O may we sit down together in the kingdom of our Father." John Wesley and George Whitefield became angry opponents over the doctrine of predestination. The controversy was so bitter that Whitefield charged Wesley with joining with infidels, atheists and deists. Yet, when Whitefield died, it was John Wesley who delivered the eulogy at the memorial service of his old opponent. Southey writes that in all of Wesley's controversies, with a single exception, he "preserved the urbane and gentle spirit which arose from the genuine benignity of his disposition and manners." Wesley did not have that intolerant spirit which the Roman Catholics possessed when they burned John Huss at Constance because he dared to disagree with the leaders of the church.

Wesley showed his spirit of tolerance in being able to see the good points in people with whom he differed. He was opposed to Unitarianism, yet he published for the Methodists a biography of Thomas Firmin, a famous Unitarian. "I

cannot agree," contended Wesley, "against matter of fact. I dare not deny that Mr. Firmin was a pious man, although his notions of the Trinity were quite erroneous." After reading the Journal of William Edmundson, a Quaker preacher, Wesley declared that he could not agree with Edmundson, but he continued: "What a spirit was there! What faith, love, gentleness, long suffering! Could mistakes send such a man as this to hell? Not so. I am so far from believing that that I scruple not to say, 'Let my soul be with the soul of William Edmundson.' "

John Wesley gave to Methodism a spirit of toleration which it has never lost. Methodism has never persecuted an individual for religious reasons. Methodism has never shed blood because of religious intolerance. Can the Roman Catholic church say that? Methodism has never passed laws to keep other denominations out of a country as the Roman Catholics have done in South America and wherever they have been dominant in power. Never has Methodism raised millions of dollars for the purpose of forcing our country to interfere in the internal affairs of a friendly nation as the American Roman Catholics have done in regard to Mexico. Neither has Methodism asked the state to pay the expenses of its ministers and its church schools. Methodism has never supported a Methodist for political office just because he was a Methodist. On the other hand, have you heard of a single Roman Catholic in America who has stated that he will vote against the Roman Catholic candidate? Why have states like New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, in which the Roman Catholics predominate, been practically conceded to the Roman Catholic candidate? Methodists are denounced as intolerant because they refuse to vote for a "wet" candidate, yet people seem to have overlooked the

fact that practically every Roman Catholic in the country will vote for the candidate from New York simply because he is a Roman Catholic. Is that "tolerance?" People, who, in order to elect a Roman Catholic to the presidency, call the Methodists intolerant, are uttering positive lies. That fighting spirit of Methodism is synonymous with the tolerant spirit of Methodism. History vindicates our record of tolerance.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ENGLAND TO JOHN WESLEY, DR.

A VISITOR to Westminster Abbey stands in reverent awe as he beholds the tombs and monuments of the British heroes. No other nation can present such a group of national leaders. Many have been the men and women who have played distinguished parts in the making of the great British Empire. Some have fought on the battle fields, some have been great statesmen, some have honored their country by eloquence and poetry, while others have contributed along spiritual lines. To all of these great men and women England owes a national debt of gratitude. Methodism is proud that among these heroes there is none who holds a higher place than John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

Yes, England owes a great debt to John Wesley. For fifty-two years he rode up and down England, preaching on an average of fifteen sermons a week. He came into close contact with more people than any other man of his century. Birrell wrote of Wesley: "You cannot put him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many lives. No single voice touched so many hearts." His contribution to England is incalculable.

John Wesley restored Christianity as a living force in the life of England. He brought back personal religion. Before Wesley began his work religion in England had become formalistic; it was a target for ridicule and criticism; its decline was setting into decay and its end was predicted in a few years. When Wesley completed his work, religion had become a

vital Christian experience; it had risen to a place of respectability and reverence in the social and spiritual life of the people; it had again become the backbone of the English nation.

John Wesley put a new emphasis in the religion of England. The great enterprises of the evangelical churches received their origin from Wesley. He caused the church members of England to feel a responsibility for all immoral conditions. When he began his work there were none of the modern agencies of our churches. Religion to the average person meant the recitation of creeds and a desultory attendance at church services. Wesley awoke the church to its work. He aroused the church to its duty of abolishing slavery, of fighting the liquor traffic, and of remedying the bad penal conditions. He caused the church to realize that its duty was to educate the ignorant, alleviate physical suffering, and to aid the poor and the profligate. Wesley caused Protestantism to become a moral power in English society.

John Wesley destroyed the power of deism in England. The deists claimed that God was far away and that He never touched mankind. Wesley exploded that argument by showing hundreds of men and women who had come into vital contact with God and whose hearts had been strangely warmed by a Christian experience. The deists had laughed at the power of the Cross; Wesley presented hundreds who had found in the Cross their happiness and salvation. The deists held that miracles were impossible; Wesley offered as proof of miracles the individuals who had been miraculously lifted from the gutter and who had become twice-born men. He showed England that there were spiritual forces as well as natural forces at work in the world.

At a critical moment John Wesley strengthened all the Protestant denominations in England. When he began his

work the Anglican church had reached its lowest ebb. Even loyal Anglicans felt that the church had gone too far to be revived. Dissenting churches like the Congregational and the Baptist were in a similar condition. Wesley was able to revive all these churches. Although the Anglican church disowned Wesley, yet he so influenced that church that there arose in it an evangelical group which carried on the reforms which Wesley championed. Under the inspiration of Wesley the Congregational ministers began to preach with new fervor. The revival of the English Baptists in the nineteenth century can be traced to the work of Wesley. Every Protestant church in England was helped by this inspired personality.

John Wesley contributed mightily to the modern greatness of England. Wesley's revival was a religious reformation but its influence touched all phases of English life. By shaking England out of her lethargy, ignorance and vice, Wesley started his country on a voyage of progress. By intensifying her moral life, Wesley changed England from the mediocre nation of the eighteenth century into the world power of the nineteenth century. Methodism wove a new strand of moral fibre into the English people.

John Wesley gave hope to the neglected and abused masses of England. No person was too degraded, too humble, or too poor to be touched by Wesley and the early Methodists. He gave to the poor people of England a new zest for life. By his doctrine of universal redemption, Wesley showed the people that God cared for all his children, and that his mercy did not extend only to the elect. Men and women who had formerly known only the sordid aspects of life found hope in Methodism. They found new happiness in singing the great Methodist hymns.

John Wesley saved England from a "French Revolu-

tion." Although England and France are separated only by the English Channel, yet, when France was experiencing her disastrous revolution, England remained calm. When the lower classes of France rose up in revolt against the state, the masses of England remained loyal to their King. When the French people almost abolished religion, the people of England became more loyal to their churches. The question arises: How was England able to escape the great catastrophe which came to France?

The answer to this mystery is to be found in the work of John Wesley. By his unceasing labors he had brought religion and thereby stability back to England. The agents of the French Revolution found in England a very hostile soil for their propaganda. Taine, the great French historian, admits that John Wesley and the Methodists saved England from revolution. Maurice writes: "England escape a political revolution because she had undergone a spiritual revolution." Overton says: "It was of incalculable benefit to the nation that just such a power as Methodism existed at the time when otherwise the revolutionary torrent would have swept away multitudes in its course." A revival of religion did for England what the French royalty, aristocracy and army could not do for France.

John Wesley saved England from the usual consequences of a new industrial situation. While Wesley was riding up and down England proclaiming a new spiritual message, a great social and industrial revolution was taking place. Factories suddenly began to rise. Thousands of people left the rural sections and migrated to the cities to work in these factories. New industrial centers arose almost overnight. An increase in population and an increase of national wealth followed. England rapidly changed from an agricultural nation

to an industrial nation; from a relatively poor country to a very wealthy country.

How was England able successfully to make the transition occasioned by this industrial revolution? The answer is to be found in the work of John Wesley and the Methodists. Methodism placed a restraining hand on the passions let loose by the new situation. It was Methodism, expanding in equal ratio with national prosperity, that kept materialism from destroying the spiritual forces of England. It was Methodism that prevented the laboring classes from becoming "bolshevists" and "anarchists." Methodism caused the employers to show a Christian attitude toward the employees. Lecky writes: "It is therefore I conceive peculiarly fortunate that it (the industrial revolution) should have been preceded by a religious revival which opened a new spring of moral and religious energy among the poor and at the same time gave a powerful impulse to the philanthropy of the rich."

John Wesley aided the economic life of England. Before the Methodist revival the lower classes wasted their money and time in gambling and drinking. There was no stability in their work. They had no great incentive to labor. John Wesley changed this situation. The qualities of sobriety and frugality which Wesley taught people brought them material abundance. The Methodists did not spend their money in drinking and gambling. By their newly acquired habit of quiet honest living, they became useful workers who saved their money.

While Wesley lived he was a prophet without honor in his own country. He was not appreciated. It is only in relatively recent years that England has come to realize the debt which she owes to Wesley. The more Wesley's record is studied the greater appears the national debt to him. Notice the testi-

mony of the historians. Birrell says: "No other man did such a life's work for England." Lecky writes that the preaching of Wesley was "of greater historical importance than all the splendid victories by land and sea won under Pitt." Southey has been very critical of Wesley's work, yet he described Wesley as "the most influential mind of the eighteenth century." Macauley denounces the writers of "books called histories of England" who fail to see that among the events which have determined that history is the rise of Methodism. "A genius for godliness" is Matthew Arnold's praise for Wesley. Buckley describes Wesley as "the first ecclesiastical statesman."

The contributions of Wesley to England contain a message for Southern Methodists. In our Southland there are problems today which are similar to those of eighteenth century England. The Southern states are undergoing an industrial revolution. There is in progress a transition from an agricultural South to an industrial South. Population is moving from rural to urban centers. Out of this industrial situation issues are arising between capital and labor. With the coming of wealth to the South will religion become a formality as in England at the time of the birth of Wesley? Already there have arisen in the South certain pseudo-scholars who are championing the materialistic philosophy of life, a philosophy more deadly than the deism of the age of Wesley. Certain of our would-be educational leaders, who feel that the only way to show that they are scholars is to criticise and attack something, have taken particular delight in criticising the religion of our Southern states. A popular cry it that since the South is becoming wealthy she must abandon her moral and religious principles and fall in line with the views propagated in our nation by the Irish and Latin Roman Catholic immigrants.

Such are the problems that face the Southern Methodists. How similar they are to those of England in the eighteenth century. Will we be true followers of John Wesley? If he almost singlehanded was able to save England from her perils, should not the 2,630,000 Southern Methodists be able to render a similar service to our Southland?

The reward for our services will come only in the future. Southern Methodists can expect to receive the same treatment that was given to John Wesley. Just as it took a century for England to appreciate Wesley, so it will also take time for America to appreciate Methodism. The future historians will thank the Methodists who are now so freely denounced by the pseudo-scholars and the subsidized newspapers. Tributes will some day be given to the people who had principle and bravery to fight the liquor forces of America. The Methodists may now be denounced for their refusal to follow blindly unscrupulous political leaders, but some day Americans will thank the Methodists for being brave enough to vote by principle and not by partyism. Methodism may now be attacked by the capitalists for meddling in the industrial problems of the nation, but fifty years from now loyal Americans will be grateful to Methodism for demanding the application of the Golden Rule in industry.

John Wesley was criticised by his fellowmen, but today there is in Westminster Abbey a monument in honor of him. By putting Christian principles ahead of all else, Wesley became England's greatest patriot. If a century from now an article is written entitled, "America to Methodism, Dr.", it will be because the Methodists of America were brave enough to carry on that fighting spirit of John Wesley.

CHAPTER XXIX

"I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT"—II TIM. 4: 7

OR FIFTY-TWO years John Wesley was "the soul that over England flamed." At the age of thirty-five his heart was "strangely warmed"; he was nearly eighty-eight years old when he finally laid down his earthly armour. He outlived all the friends of his youth and middle age. His brother, Charles Wesley, and his comrade, George Whitefield, both died before him. Most of the lay preachers who had helped Wesley in his early ministry had also passed to their reward. But the great fighter of Methodism continued his unparalleled moral and religious crusade long after he was "three score years and ten."

Wesley retained his physical faculties almost to the hour of his death. When he was eighty-three years of age he wrote: "I am a wonder to myself. I am never tired either with writing, traveling, or preaching." He continued until the week of his death the practice of rising at four o'clock in the morning. When friends begged him to rest, Wesley would reply that he was determined to "do a little for God before he dropped into the dust." When he was eighty-seven years old he made his annual visit to Scotland. On that trip he traveled on horseback one day nearly eighty miles, and preached that evening without suffering pain. It was not until within two years of his death that Wesley began to feel the weight of his age. When he was eighty-five he admitted that he was not quite so agile as he had formerly been, and that his sight was a little decayed. Two years later he notes: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim, my

right hand shakes much. I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow; but I can preach and write still."

Not only did Wesley keep his physical powers but he also retained the serenity and the kindliness which characterized his life after his conversion. As Jarrell writes: "The passage of years whitened his head and dimmed his sight; it made his feet stumble, his hand tremble, and his memory hesitated but all that was noble in Wesley were exactly as in the day of his prime." He kept to the end the happiness which had come to him on May 24, 1738. Alexander Knox says: "So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed the gay remembrance of a life well spent." Such unclouded sunshine of the breast in the deepest winter of age and on the felt verge of eternity bespoke a mind whose recollections were as unsullied as its present sensations were serene. He was the grand old man of Methodism.

To the very end of his life Wesley thought of his followers. He was especially interested in the American Methodists, who were just beginning their spiritual conquest of America. As Wesley thought of the American Methodists, separated as they were by a mighty ocean from the Methodists of England, he longed for all Methodists to remain as one great family. So on February 1, 1791, just one month before he died, Wesley wrote his final letter to America. His dying message was: "Declare to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue:

> Though mountains rise and oceans roll
> To sever us in vain."

On February 24, 1791, Wesley wrote his last letter, which was a letter of encouragement to William Wilberforce who was then leading the fight in the English parliament for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. To him Wesley wrote: "Go on in the name of God and in the power of his might till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish before it. Unless God has raised you up for this thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you, who can be against you?" It is no wonder then that Wilberforce, upon the receipt of that letter, began with renewed vigor his fight against that infamous villainy of slavery.

Wesley preached until seven days before his death. His last sermon was preached on February 23, 1791, at Leatherhead, a village near London. Although Wesley was nearing his eighty-eighth birthday and although he should have been in bed, yet, because he had an opportunity to do a good deed, he undertook in the dead of winter a forty mile trip. At Leatherhead there was a man whose wife had recently died. In his distress this gentleman, who had never personally met Wesley, begged Wesley to come and comfort him. Hence accompanied by one of his preachers, James Rogers, Wesley started on the trip. In these words, Rogers has described Wesley's last sermon: "In less than two hours after our arrival our kind host, who was magistrate and well beloved in the neighborhood, sent his servants to invite the inhabitants to hear Mr. Wesley preach. A considerable number soon assembled, and were ordered upstairs into a spacious dining room, covered with a beautiful carpet, and set around with fine mahogany chairs. The plain country people, who came plodding through the mire, seemed rather out of their element; but they all appeared to hear with deep attention while

Mr. Wesley gave them a most solemn warning from the words: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." With that great Scripture as his text, Wesley closed his famous career as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The physical exertion of the services at Leatherhead was too great for Wesley. On Friday, February 25, two days after the sermon, Wesley was put to bed with a quick pulse and a burning fever. On Saturday he was still ill, and from that time until the following Wednesday he lingered between life and death. Sometimes he was rational; at other times delirious. In his last hours of life Wesley seemed to live over again the days of his great ministry. He thought he was meeting with his societies, preaching to the masses, and riding up and down England as he had done for fifty-two years.

John Wesley in the hour of death kept faith with his Saviour. On Sunday morning Wesley's mind went back again to a sudden illness which he had had in Bristol in 1783, when it was thought that he would die. At that time he had said to a friend: "I have been wandering up and down England between fifty and sixty years, endeavoring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow-creatures; and now it is probable that there are but few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust for salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this:

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.' "

Wesley now related this incident to the friends in his room. One of the ladies, a Miss Richie, asked Wesley: "Is that your language now?" "Yes," affirmed Wesley, "Christ is all! He is all!"

On Tuesday morning, March 1, after a restless night, Wesley asked for pen and ink. When it was brought to him, he made an attempt to write but his fingers could no longer render their usual services. One of the persons present said to Wesley: "Let me write for you, sir: tell me what you would say." "Nothing," replied Wesley, "but that God is with us." He then attempted to leave his bed. While his friends were bringing his clothes Wesley began to sing a hymn. It was his brother's hymn. The words are so symbolic of Wesley's life:

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my noblest pow'rs:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures."

That was Wesley's "swan song." How typical and fitting. Of all men who ever lived none had more fully praised his Maker.

Gradually the sands of Wesley's life ebbed away. Wesley's death has been described thus by an eyewitness: "Finding that they could not understand him, he [Wesley] paused a little and with all the remaining strength he cried out, 'THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US:' and then raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart reviving word, 'THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US.' He lingered on during

Tuesday night. During the night he was heard to utter in feeble terms, 'I'll praise—I'll praise.' Finally on Wednesday morning his end came. While his friends prayed, he was heard to articulate, 'Farewell' and a few minutes before ten, while several of his friends were kneeling around his bed, without a lingering groan, this man of God, this beloved pastor of thousands, entered into the joy of his Lord."

Wesley was buried on March 9, 1791. The day before the funeral his body lay in state in City Road Chapel. So many people came to pay their last tribute of respect to Wesley that business in City Road was practically suspended. The crowd that came to look at Wesley for the last time was estimated at ten thousand persons. Because of this multitude it was thought best to bury Wesley between five and six o'clock in the morning. Although the notice was given only at the last moment to his immediate friends, yet hundreds attended Wesley's funeral. Wesley in his will had stated: "I particularly desire there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of those that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom." In accordance with that request the funeral was of the simplest kind.

How touching and inspiring to us are the last moments of Wesley's life. He came to the grave with the same noble spirit with which he had lived his long life. The thought of death did not scare Wesley. He did not have the regrets which come to those who live a wicked and worthless life. He did not have to say: "Oh, if I had only done otherwise while I lived." His body was not marred by the vices and immoralities of his century. His conscience was clear. John Wesley died at peace with God and the world.

John Wesley died in peace because he had fought a good fight during the days and years which had been given to him.

He had kept the faith. He had kept the faith with his Saviour. He had been true to his mother and his father. As Wesley finished his course he knew that there was a crown of righteousness laid up for him. He could face his Creator. By serving the poor, the naked, the hungry, and the imprisoned, Wesley had won a mansion in His Father's House.

Are the modern Methodists true followers of John Wesley? Are we fighting a good fight? Are we keeping the faith? Can we sing with John Wesley, "I'll praise my Saviour while I've breath?" In the hour of death, can we say with John Wesley, "I have no other plea than this:

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"

Do we have that fighting spirit of Methodism which immortalized the name of John Wesley?

Finis

INDEX

Ackham, 82.
Africa, 55.
Aldersgate Street, 48, 49, 51, 123.
Aldrich's Logic, 108.
America, 55, 89, 126, 141, 145, 152, 186.
American Revolution, 89.
Anglican Church, 25, 28, 64, 77, 116, 121, 122, 123, 128, 136, 142, 149, 150, 152, 161, 166, 168, 174, 180; loss of prestige, 19; clergy of, 20; debars Wesley, 53, 80-82, 164-166; and slave trade, 88; debars Lady Huntingdon, 161; loved by Wesley, 163-4.
Annesley, Dr. Samuel, 26, 28.
Apostles Creed, 122.
Apostolic Succession, 65-66, 77.
Arbroath, 147.
Aristocracy, Methodism and, 156-162.
Arminian Magazine, 107.
Arminian theory, 30.
Arnold, Matthew, 183.
Asbury, Francis, 15.
Asia, 55.
Assistants, Methodist, 71-72.
Assurance, doctrine of, 124, 132.
Athanasian Creed, 122.
Athlone, 139.
Ave Maria, 137.

Ball, Hannah, 101.
Ballyhays, 140.
Bancroft, George, on Methodism, 125.
Baptists, 19, 77, 121, 129, 172, 180,
Barnard, Sir John, 19.
Barr, J. H., 84.
Bate, Reverend, 20.
Beecher, Henry Ward, 130.
Benson, Bishop, 21.
Birmingham, 22.
Birrell, Mr., 178, 183.
Blackstone, Judge, 20.
Blackwell, Ebenezer, 111.
Bohler, Peter, influences Wesley, 47-48.
Bolton, 100, 102.
Book Room, The, 79, 106.
Boston, 154.
Brighton, 159.
Bristol, 53, 60, 61, 65, 93, 94, 97, 105, 116, 151, 152, 188.
British Colonies, 152.
Buckley, Dr., 135, 183.
Burke, Edmund, 21.
Burnet, Bishop, 20.
Butler, Bishop, 20.

Calvin, John, 115, 118, 120, 121.
Calvinism, 30, 115-120, 142.
Charlton, 84.
Charterhouse, Wesley at, 36-37.
Chester, 102.
Children, Wesley and, 98-103.
Christian experience, stressed by Methodism, 123.
Christian Library, 106-107.
Church of England, see Anglican Church.
Church of Scotland, 141-146.
Circuit-riders, 13-14.
City Road Chapel, 79, 190.
Clanard, 140.
Clarke, Dr. Adam, 145.
Class-meeting, Methodist, 61-63.
Conference, Methodist, origin, 71.

Coke, Thomas, 167.
Coleridge, on Wesley, 50.
Congregational Church, 129, 180.
Constance, Huss at, 175.
Cooke, Sophia, Miss, aids Robert Raikes, 101.
Cornwall, County, 23.
Cork, 139.
Criminal law, in eighteenth century England, 21.

Deed of Declaration, 167-68.
Deism, Wesley destroys, 179.
Democracy, Lack of in England, 23; at the Foundry, 78; Wesley and, 90.
Discipline, Methodist, 72.
Dispensary, Wesley opens medical, 94-95.
Doddridge, Philip, 128.
Droitwich, 22.
Drunkenness, in England, 21, 88.
Dublin, 137, 138, 139.
Dummer, 151.
Dunwich, 22.
Durham, 83.

Edinburgh, 143, 145, 147.
Edmundson, William, 176.
Education, Methodist statistics, 16; in England, 22; Wesley and, 104-09.
Embury, Philip, 141.
England, 35, 55, 56, 64, 66, 69, 75, 80, 84, 95, 126, 136, 142, 144, 149, 151, 152, 156, 166, 167, 188; religious conditions, 19-20; morals, 21; criminal law of, 21; education in, 22; political conditions, 22; debt to Wesley, 178.
Epworth, 25, 26, 32, 38, 39, 49, 81, 83, 124, 125, 128.
Epworth rectory, 28, 30, 36.
Europe, 55.

Ferrers, Earl of, 156.
Firmin, Thomas, 175.
Fletcher, John, 135.
Fitchett, W. H., 38.
Fogg's Weekly Journal, on Holy Club, 35.
Foundry, the mother church, 75-79, 94, 95, 96, 105, 106.
France, 55, 181.
Franklin, Benjamin, 153, 154.
French Protestants, 116.
French Revolution, 23, 80, 180-81.
Fundamentalists, 126, 127.

Gallatin, Captain, 143.
Garrick, David, 159.
General Rules, The, 60-61, 88, 170.
George III, King, 162.
Georgia, 29, 101, 128; Wesley in, 39, 41-46, 47, 49.
Germany, 41, 53.
Gibson, Bishop, 165.
Gilder, description of Wesley, 54.
Gillies, Dr., 145.
Glasgow, 145.
Gloucester, 101, 149, 151.
Great Gardens, 83.
Green, J. R., historian, 19.
Guisborough, 55.
Gwennap Pit, 55.

Harnack, Adolph von, 15.
Harris, Howell, 81.
Hastings, Lady, 157.
Hayes, Cardinal, 172.
Healy, Jonathan, 139.
Heck, Barbara, 141.
Holy Club, 53, 93, 150; at Oxford, 32-35; John Wesley and, 38.
Hopkey, Miss Sophy, romance of, 44-46.
Horder, Garret, 132.

Horrnberry, 84.
Hospitals, in Southern Methodism, 18.
Howard, John, 93-94.
House of Commons, 21, 22.
Hughes, on Methodism, 51.
Huntingdon, Earl of, 156, 158.
Huntingdon, Lady Selina, Countess of, early life, 156; conversion, 157-58; aids Methodism, 158-61; and Anglican Church, 161.
Huss, John, 172, 175.
Hymns, of Charles Wesley, 128-135; use in Scotland, 146.

India, 89.
Indians, Wesley and, 42, 43, 45, 46.
Industrial Revolution, 181-82.
Inquisition, Roman Catholic, 172.
Intolerance, Roman Catholic, 138-40, 170-77.
Ireland, 54, 55, 136, 142, 144, 145, 167; Methodism in, 84-85, 137-41; Roman Catholicism in, 136-141.
Irish Methodism, 137-41.
Itinerant system, Wesley's views, 69-70.

Jaco, Peter, 82.
Jails, of England, 22; Wesley visits, 93.
Jane, John, 67.
Jarrell, C. C., 186.
Johnson, Dr. Samuel, 57.
Justification by faith, 51, 53, 124.

Kempis, Thomas a, 33, 38.
Kingswood, 53, 152.
Kingswood School, 105.
Knox, Alexander, 186.
Knox, John, 142.
Lady Huntingdon Connexion, 161.
Lavington, Bishop, 175.
Law, William, 33, 38.
Lay-preachers, adopted by Wesley, 65-66, 69; pay of, 66-67; value of, 67; in Southern Methodism, 68; probation of, 72; at Foundry, 78; rules for, 70-71, 74, 99, 103; persecuted, 67-68, 82-83, 139, 165; aid Wesley, 64-68, 149.
Leatherhead, 187.
Lecky, W. E. H., historian, 51, 182, 183.
Lee, Thomas, 82.
Leeds, 82.
Liberalism, of Methodism, 122-27.
Lichfield, Bishop of, 20.
Lincoln College, 32.
London, 47, 54, 59, 65, 71, 75, 93, 94, 96, 97, 99, 123, 139, 151, 156, 187, 188.
London, Bishop of, 81.
London Evening Mail, 96.
Luther, Martin, 48, 124, 128.
Lutheran Church, 137.

Macauley, Lord, 183.
Manchester, 22.
Mann, Sir Horace, 159.
Massachusetts, 176.
Mather, Alexander, 145.
Maurice, 181.
Maxfield, Thomas, 65-66, 78.
Maxwell, Lady, 145.
McTyeire, H. N., Bishop, 17.
Methodism, fighting spirit of, 14, 35, 40, 46, 51-52, 63, 68, 78, 79, 86, 91, 103, 109, 114, 127, 139-41, 147-48, 162, 168-69, 177, 191; conditions prior to, 23; influence of Susanna Wesley, 30; birthday of, 47-52; need of crusaders, 58; small beginnings, 57-63; organized for conquest, 69-74; liberal theology, 77, 122-27; attacked, 81-84; aids

sick, 94; Sunday school, 102; and education, 109; humble origin, 110, 114; and wealth, 110-14; theology, 121-27; Charles Wesley aids, 129; hymns of, 128-35; cheerfulness of, 134, 180; in Scotland, 142-48; orator of, 149-55; helped by Whitefield, 155; and aristocracy, 156-62; and prohibition, 170; and alcohol, 184.
Methodist, name, 35.
Methodist Ecumenical Conference, 1881, 135.
Methodist Episcopal Church, 16, 73.
Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 17-18, 86, 183, 184; losses during Civil War, 16; General Rules in, 61; laymen in, 68.
Methodist hymnal, 129, 131.
Minutes, Methodist, 71.
Missions, John Wesley's attitude, 55.
Modernists, 126, 127.
Montesquieu, 19.
Moravians, influence Wesley, 41-42, 44, 47.
Mormons, 129.

Nelson, John, 83, 85, 159.
Newcastle, 88, 102, 106.
New England, 154.
New Jersey, 176.
New York, 172, 173, 176, 177.
Nicene Creed, 122.
Ninde, E. S., 149.
Nolley, Richmond, 13-14.

Oglethorpe, General, 43-44.
Oldham, 100.
Open-air preaching, 53, 165.
Orphans, aided by Wesley, 96.
Overton, Canon, 25, 181.
Oxford University, 25, 27, 28, 30, 37, 38, 51, 93, 97, 116, 128, 150, 160; Wesley at, 32-35; Holy Club at, 32-35, 53; mistreats Methodists, 84, 160.

Pallas, 140.
Pately, 82.
Patrick, Saint, 137.
Paul, Apostle, 49, 108, 124.
Pennsylvania, University of, 154.
Penzance, 83.
Periam, Joseph, 84.
Perth, 147.
Persecution, of Methodists in England, 80-85; in Ireland, 84-85; of Wesley, 91; by Roman Catholics, 138-40.
Philadelphia, 154.
Pitt, 183.
Pius IX, Pope, 175.
Pocklinton, 83.
Political conditions, in England, 22.
Politics, Wesley and, 90; in America, 170-78.
Polity, criticism of Methodist, 72-73.
Pope, Alexander, on Samuel Wesley, 25.
Poverty, and Wesley, 95-96.
Predestination, 115-20; confuses Wesley, 30; in Scotland, 142, 146.
Presbyterian church, 19, 77, 116, 117, 119, 121, 129, 142, 146.
Press, attacks Methodism, 84.
Primitive Physic, 95.
Prohibition, Methodism and, 170.
Protestantism, 19, 128, 129, 136, 137, 148, 172, 179, 180.
Puritans, 19, 116.

Quakers, 19, 176.

Raikes, Robert, 101.

Rankin, Thomas, 145.
Religious education, Wesley and, 98-103, 105.
Rhode Island, 176.
Richards, Thomas, 65.
Richie, Miss, 189.
Riggs, Dr., 126.
Rodda, Richard, 102.
Rogers, James, 187.
Roman Catholicism, 43, 84, 128, 142, 145, 171, 183; fears Methodism, 15; persecution of Methodism, 84-85; in Ireland, 136-141; intolerance of, 171-177.
Roosevelt, Theodore, 114.

Sabbath observance, 20-21; Wesley and, 90.
St. Giles Cathedral, 147.
Saint Ives, 81, 82, 83, 102.
Savannah, 43, 44, 45.
Scotland, 54, 56, 153, 167; representation in, 22-23; Methodism in, 142-48; Wesley in, 143-148, 185; religion in, 142-143.
Scotsman, The, 147.
Sickness, Wesley and, 94-95.
Slavery, Wesley and, 88-89, 187.
Social gospel, according to Wesley, 92-93.
Societies, Methodist, 59-61, 64.
South America, 172, 176.
Southern states, 183, 184.
Southey, Robert, 50, 141, 161, 183.
Spangenberg, August, 42.
Spaulding, Bishop, on Methodism, 15.
Stead, historian, 56, 131.
Stevens, Abel, 30.
Strangers, aided by Wesley, 96.
Stranger's Friend Societies, 96.
Strawbridge, Robert, 141.
Suffrage, Wesley on, 90.
Sullivan, Daniel, 139.
Sunday school, 16, 68; in Southern Methodism, 18; Wesley and, 101-2.

Taine, H. A., 181.
Tammany Hall, 170.
Taylor, Isaac, 133.
Taylor, Jeremy, 33.
Tealby, 82.
Temperance, Wesley and, 88-89.
Theology, Methodist, 121-127.
Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, 122, 124.
Todd, Silas, 77, 105.
Tolerance, of Methodism, 170-177.
Tombigbee River, 13.
Tomochichi, 43.
Toplady, Augustus, 119.
Tracts, used by Wesley, 107.
Trembath, John, 139.
Trevecca College, 160.
Tyerman, Luke, 37.

Ulster, 136.
Unitarianism, 121, 127, 129, 175.
Universalists, 129.

Vasey, Thomas, 167.
Vice, Wesley and, 90-91.
Volstead Act, 170.

Walpole, Sir Horace, 159.
Walsh, Thomas, 140.
War, Wesley and, 89-90.
Warrington, 82.
Waterloo, 24.
Watts, Isaac, 128, 132.
Wealth, Wesley and, 110-114.
Wednesbury, 81, 82, 83.
Wellington, Duke of, 24, 69.
Wesley family, lineage, 24-25.
Wesley, Charles, 26, 49, 64, 81, 91, 140, 143, 149, 185, 189; and Holy Club, 32-35; early

life, 128; poet of Methodism, 128-35; conversion, 130; on predestination, 120, 133-34; death, 134; in Ireland, 138; aids Whitefield, 150; denounced, 166.

Wesley, John, on religion in England, 20; heritage, 24-31; birth, 25; influence of mother, 26-27, 28, 30, 36, 66, 116; frugality of, 28-29; serenity, 29, 56-57; missionary zeal, 29, 55; tenderness of, 30; at Charterhouse, 36-37; at Oxford University, 32-35, 37, 38; and Holy Club, 33-35, 38; enters ministry, 37-38; as curate, 38; humanitarian attitude, 38; seeks vital religion, 36-40, 41; assiduous worker, 34, 57, 108; philanthropy of, 29, 34, 97; in Georgia, 41-42, 43-46, 47, 49, 101; romance of, 44-46, 50; influenced by Bohler, 47-48; experience in Aldersgate Street, 48-49, 50, 51; the changed, 49-50, 51; open-air preaching, 53; in Ireland, 54, 136-141; in Scotland, 54, 143-48, 185; the crusader, 53-58; rejected by Anglican Church, 53, 80-82, 164-166; physique, 56, 185-86; aided by laymen, 64-68; organizes societies, 59-61; organizes classes, 61-63; and itinerancy, 69-70; organizes Methodist conference, 71; and Foundry, 75-79; persecution of, 82, 84, 91; faces the issues, 88-91; slave trade, 88-89; and temperance, 87-88; opposes war, 89-90; visits jails, 93; and poverty, 95-96; and children, 98-103; on religious education, 98-103, 105; and Sunday Schools, 101-102; on education, 104-109; as author, 106-08; and wealth, 110-114; and Calvinism, 115-120; his theology, 121-27; liberalism of 122-127; on Irish Catholicism, 137; aids Whitefield, 150; and aristocracy, 156-162; and Lady Huntingdon, 157; love for Anglican church, 163-164; breaks with Anglican church, 166-169; ordains helpers, 167; tolerance of, 173-177; controversy with Whitefield, 175; contributions to England, 178-184; religious contributions, 179-80; and French Revolution, 180-81; Industrial Revolution, 181-82; tributes to, 183; in old age, 185-86; last sermon, 187-88; death, 189-90.

Wesley, Samuel, 37, 38, 39; early life, 26; scholar, 25; fighting spirit, 25-26; religious views, 26; poverty, 28.

Wesley, Susanna, early life, 26; trains children, 26, 27, 29; religious zeal, 27; independent will, 28; poverty, 28; serenity, 29; missionary zeal, 29; tenderness, 29; influence on son, 26-27, 30, 36, 66, 116; on predestination, 30, 116; influence on Methodism, 30.

Westall, Thomas, 65.

Westminster Abbey, 80, 178, 184.

West Indies, 89, 167.

Whatcoat, Richard, 167.

Whitefield, George, 64, 143, 144, 158, 162, 186; preaches at Kingswood, 53; controversy with Wesley, 119, 175; orator

of Methodism, 149-155; early life, 149-50; at Oxford, 150; aided by Wesleys, 150; conversion, 150; enters ministry, 150-51; first sermon, 151; at Bristol, 151; in London, 151; debarred by Anglican church, 151-152; in America, 152-53; eloquence of, 153-154; death, 154; aid to Methodism, 155.
Widows, aided by Wesley, 96.
Wigan, 102.
Wilberforce, William, 187.
William the Conqueror, 102.
Williams, Thomas, 137.
Williamson, William, 45.
Wrestlingworth, 55.
Wycombe, 101.
York, Archbishop of, 28.

Date Due

Mr 27 '42			
Ap 2 - '42			
Ag 7			
Ap 8 '46			
Ag 16 '46			
[illegible]			
[illegible]			
[illegible]

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
MAY 2 1932
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BX8232 .G21
That fighting spirit of Methodism
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
1 1012 00021 0452